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EDITORIAL

PRE-EMPTIVE MADNESS

America was looking the other way when Israel surgically excised Iraq's nuclear plant—our Saudi-based Awacs spy planes were, we are told, staring vacantly at hapless Iran. It is likely that we will go on averting our gaze, like most of the frightened world, as the doctrine of pre-emptive strikes pushes the nuclear clock toward the ultimate hour. The nexus between nuclear power and nuclear weaponry was never clearer, and the need for nuclear disarmament never more urgent.

There is blame enough to spread around for this dangerous action. You can start with Menachem Begin and his electoral opportunism, but then comes the quick leap to Arab intransigence, international oil politics and superpower rivalries.

"Never again," says Begin. "There won't be another Holocaust in history." That, of course, is a special use of the term, drawn from the indelible memory of the Nazi extermination of Europe's Jews. But when the word is applied to today's world, bristling with nuclear weaponry, where ten times six million could be consumed in just one burst of the flame, it takes on an awful dissonance.

The United States arms, supplies and supports Israel. There can be no quarrel with that. What we can and should criticize, however, are the ways in which U.S. policy affects the context of action in the Middle East—the things we do and don't do that persuade Israel to leash or unleash its arms, made in America. In this instance we must note that, the Habib mission notwithstanding, the Reagan doctrine of confrontation with the U.S.S.R. in all parts of the world, including the Middle East, has encouraged Begin, in his smaller cockpit, to imitate that aggressive stance. Washington and Jerusalem are playing with fire. Never again.

THE SHAH AND THE ASPEN INSTITUTE
William A. Dorman

CO-OPTING ACADEMIA
David F. Noble

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VIETNAM VETS: THE MORAL RECKONING
Peter Marin

'MEDIA POWER POLITICS'
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YGLESIAS'S 'SWEETSIR'
Vivian Gornick

THE DEREGULATORS

LEGALIZING CORPORATE MURDER

PAUL SAVOY

The convoluted wording of legalisms grew up around the necessity to hide from ourselves the violence we intend toward each other. Between depriving a man of one hour from his life and depriving him of his life there exists only a difference of degree.

—*Frank Herbert,* Dune Messiah

It is now open season on crime. Not only are state legislatures across the country gearing up for stiffer penalties for criminal offenders and funding for new prison and jail construction but the act of defending persons charged with felonious conduct has itself become a criminal offense.

In one of the more astonishing pronouncements by a member of the Reagan Administration, Edwin Meese 3d, the President's lawyer, charged in a speech last month to the California Peace Officers Association that the American Civil Liberties Union is part of a nationwide "criminals' lobby." And in December of last year, in a more bellicose attack on the defense of constitutional rights, William Wilson, a longtime associate of the President and now his envoy to the Vatican, declared in a letter to Stanley Sheinbaum, chairman of the A.C.L.U. Foundation of Southern California, that the A.C.L.U. "must have some sort of assured protection from lawbreakers" and may be "supported by those whom they in turn are helping, namely, organized crime."

That such irresponsible accusations should originate with such high-ranking officials of government is substantial cause for alarm among

(*Continued on Page 761*)

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LETTERS.

ACCENTUATE THE AFFIRMATIVE

Sonoma, Calif.

In her review of five current books ["Forgetting Who Are 'The People,' " *The Nation*, May 2], Jean Bethke Elshtain criticizes my *The American Nightmare* for wanting to "praise" rather than "bury Affirmative Action as a strategy, principle, or both." This is a bizarre depiction of a book that documents in detail the failings of affirmative action in unions, universities, professional schools, business and government; that describes the grievant litigation procedures as "affirmative inaction," and that dissects the conceptual failings of the policy in a chapter entitled "Balms and Nostrums." There, I conclude, "no matter how effectively affirmative action is enforced, it cannot produce major change, because it ignores . . . the profound cultural, and ultimately political-economic, reasons for inequality."

Elshtain's claim that I would "lead us into the good society by creating an 'ideal management world' in which automated record-keeping made for better equal opportunity 'programming' " is also contrary to my thinking. Although affirmative action is a weak procedure, it is the Federal mandate at present, the one employers must by law follow in their efforts at equal opportunity. Consequently, I thought it my responsibility to include a chapter advising egalitarian managers on ways to increase the efficacy of the regulations. How these suggestions, which include problems in organizational communication, fallacious personnel practices and comparable pay schedules reduce to "automated record-keeping" is a puzzle. And I've no illusions—my advice will at best improve the lot of a few workers in corporate settings. Furthermore, the theme of my social policy chapter is that the segregated labor market must be dismantled, a goal much more radical than affirmative action can handle.

Finally, Elshtain simply puts words in my mouth on another issue. True, I said that were equal opportunity to exist, sex differences might be few in number. But this need not imply a "world of nearly indistinguishable wimps," a demeaning of men and women "to presume the only basis for sex equality is the homogenization of human subjects." Those are Elshtain's deductions, not mine. It is current sexual, racial, ethnic and class stereotypes that demean people by forcing them into homogenized types. The repression of personal variability is one of the deplorable psychological consequences of social inequality, a threat to the human dignity both Elshtain and I are worried about.

Clarice Stasz

The Nation welcomes letters—typed, double-spaced and no longer than 300 words, please. Longer letters may be edited for reasons of space.

ELSHTAIN REPLIES

Amherst, Mass.

In her response to my review, Clarice Stasz backpedals so furiously from the positions articulated in her book it leaves me somewhat breathless. Let's begin with "indistinguishable wimps." In her letter, Stasz claims that her argument was that "were equal opportunity to exist, sex differences might be few in number." But this is not the claim she makes in her book, where she states: "If boys and girls in our society had *identical experiences and opportunities*, then the *few differences now found between women and men would probably be reduced to an infinitesimal number*" (emphasis added). Note the important, not trivial, differences between this claim and the much milder version stated in her letter. In the book she refers not to equal opportunity but to *identical* experiences and opportunities. In the book she refers, not to sex differences as "few in number," for she claims we have that already, but to their reduction to an "infinitesimal number." Surely it is a reasonable, not a wild, deduction on my part, given Stasz's use of such terms as "identical" and "infinitesimal," to see in this an implicit embrace of the flattening out of sex differences, not just the elimination of unjustifiable inequalities, which she and I both call for. Worry about "the repression of personal variability" emerges not only under circumstances of social inequality but under circumstances of forced, socially mandated and administratively enforced sexual, cultural and political uniformity *in the name of* or *under cover of* equality. If egalitarians are to have any credibility, they must be concerned, quite explicitly, with the latter as well as the former.

Second, I did not criticize Stasz for wanting to "praise" rather than to "bury" affirmative action. I simply indicated that she joins hands with several of the other authors whose books I reviewed in a defense of affirmative action. But I singled Stasz out for praise for her attention to problems of poverty and class not dealt with by affirmative action. I also noted that Stasz's courage in this regard was welcome, as many others are not so candid and tend to cover up these difficulties.

As to Stasz's plans for how managers can become more efficient at implementing affirmative action, she and I have a major disagreement concerning the possibilities which inhere in what she, not I, calls "an ideal management world." Stasz criticizes what she terms "non-automated" record keeping as one way in which employers fail to facilitate affirmative action implementation, and so on. None of this comes close to getting at the heart of the problem, and Stasz knows it. Indeed, the assiduous, glassy-eyed generation of mountains of papers indicating that one is following the letter of the law in affirmative action matters has done little to approximate some coherent and compelling image of social equality and justice.

Jean Bethke Elshtain

MORE TRILLIN!

Los Angeles

I am not threatening to cancel my subscription—no, I promise to take *The Nation* indefinitely. But I do have an important question. WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO WITH THE ISSUES—FAR TOO MANY OF THEM—THAT COME WITHOUT A CALVIN TRILLIN PAGE?

"Read them!" I hear you reply. Fair enough. But that's easy for you to say. You just write the magazine. *I* have to read it. I have to read page after depressing page of evidence that I am constantly poisoned by my environment, lied to by my government, dictated to by multinational corporations, surrounded by nations with fascist dictators and will most likely be a victim of a nuclear holocaust. I take all of this very seriously. I'm scared to death.

I can bear it all only when I can turn to Trillin and laugh my head off. I was once laughing so hard that I had to stop reading at the bottom of the first column, get up from my desk for an hour or so to pursue other activities and then return for the second half. The man is certainly crazy in the best sense of the word. I confess that *Floater* did nothing for me, but *Alice, Let's Eat* and *American Fried* and all the pages from *The Nation* are marvelous. How about a published collection of all *The Nation* pieces?

Meanwhile, I continue to read, laugh and tear out the page and take it to colleagues at work. We teach junior high school English, and we need all the humor we can get there, too.

My suggestion for improvement of your already splendid journal: Trillin every week.

Ann Bourman

We must disagree: the way things are going we need Trillin every day. We may need him in place of The New York Times *or* The Washington Post. *Unfortunately, Trillin holds down another job, which requires him to be on the road quite a bit—writing the "U.S. Journal" for* The New Yorker. *At* Nation *rates, a weekly column would, apparently, make serious inroads into his family's level of subsistence, and, as the title of his book* Alice, Let's Eat *suggests, subsistence is an overriding concern with him. Fortunately for Trillin lovers, a collection of his* Nation *columns is in the works and will be published in spring 1982 by Ticknor & Fields.* —*The Editors*

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EDITORIALS.

Congress Drugged

Most politicians like to be of service to Big Business; last year's bipartisan assault on the Federal Trade Commission is just one example. Republicans, however, do it with a naturalness and a dispatch that Democrats can only envy. Consider, for example, the swift generosity extended a few weeks ago to the drug industry by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Two bills are involved. The first is designed to help Pfizer and four other multinational drug companies avoid having to pay heavy antitrust damages to some foreign countries. Five years ago, the F.T.C. ruled that Pfizer, Upjohn, American Cyanamid, Bristol-Myers and Squibb had illegally conspired to fix the price of broad-spectrum antibiotics on a worldwide basis. So far the companies have been forced to pay out more than $200 million to some of their victims. Germany, India, Colombia and other countries who bought these drugs have sued for treble damages under our antitrust laws. In 1978, the Supreme Court rejected a challenge by a drug company to the foreign governments' right to sue and the case was set for trial in Philadelphia this month.

Having lost in court, the companies went to Congress with a bill barring foreign governments from suing unless they passed a law allowing the United States to bring the same suits in their courts, a condition very few countries can meet. Until now, the drug companies have not been too successful, partly because of opposition by the Justice Department. This year, however, things changed. After a cursory one-hour hearing during the Easter recess, at which no opposition witnesses were heard and the Justice Department testified in support of the legislation, the bill was promptly scheduled for immediate action by the full Judiciary Committee. The German government bitterly protested the haste, requested more hearings, charged treaty violations and warned of retaliation, but to no avail. The bill was

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voted out of committee after just a few minutes of discussion.

On its face, the proposal is not wholly unreasonable. Limiting the right to sue to countries that reciprocate isn't unusual. What makes this a particularly egregious piece of special-interest legislation, however, is that the restrictive conditions will be imposed retroactively. The only thing affected by this retroactivity is the case in Philadelphia, and the inevitable result is to undercut seriously the foreign governments' position there. A law intended to impair someone's rights in a specific pending suit is probably unconstitutional if inflicted on an American, and is unfair, no matter who the target. It is also especially hypocritical when such a law is enacted by a nation espousing free competition, and on behalf of flagrant lawbreakers who illegally overcharged for life-saving drugs.

The second bit of beneficence for the drug industry also looks reasonable at first, but it's even worse and its consequences are more far-reaching. Since 1962, new drugs have had to be approved by the Food and Drug Administration as safe and effective. This takes time, and the drug companies have claimed that the approval process can cut the statutory seventeen years of patent protection to only nine or ten. In each of the past two Congresses they have unsuccessfully pushed a proposal to extend their patent protection by the number of years lost for testing, up to a maximum of seven.

This sounds only fair, and it has appealed to editorial writers on both *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. But the fairness is only superficial. Unlike most other products, drugs generally retain exclusivity protection many years beyond the patent life. Through the intensive advertising of brand names and manipulation of the patent system, drug companies have locked up huge shares of the market—often 90 to 100 percent—long after expiration of the basic patent, and often in the face of much cheaper generic drugs just as good. For example, years after its patent on ampicillin expired, Bristol-Myers's Polycillin brand outsold its generic competitor five to one, even though the Polycillin price was almost twice that of the generic. And that's typical.

Nor, it turns out, are losses from regulatory delay all that huge. Much of the time supposedly lost would have been spent on market research, and the drug wouldn't have been sold then anyway. A Congressional study by the Office of Technology Assessment to be published next month indicates that the actual loss of patent protection may average no more than a year. Chairman Strom Thurmond didn't want the Senate Judiciary Committee to wait a month for that study and had the bill voted out, without any discussion at all, at the first possible opportunity.

The industry's claim that it will be forced to cut back on research because of this supposed loss of patent protection is a hollow one. Just a few days before the Judiciary Committee voted, *The Times* reported that even without the proposed legislation, the drug industry is spending billions on research because it "sees a golden era ahead." And the industry isn't exactly short of money now. In 1980, it ranked fourth in return on equity at almost 20.5 percent, just behind energy companies and tobacco, and far above the national average of 14 percent; in the past it has usually ranked in the top two or three.

Finally, the introduction of *important* new drugs hasn't slowed down because of the testing procedures. According to the F.D.A., that number has consistently stayed at about three or four per year.

Only the United States protects vital drugs against all competition for the life of the patent. In most other Western countries, the patentee must license its competitors. When Senator Jacob Javits—hardly a radical populist—proposed a few years ago to link such a license to extension of the patent, the industry protested. Unless they run into unexpected trouble in the House, it looks as if the drug companies' patience will pay off and they will get it all—many more years of patent protection and much higher prices and profits. So much for the free market.

The Paper Chase

As part of its well-publicized war on government waste, the Administration recently announced a freeze on the production of all "public relations, publicity and advertising materials" emanating from Federal agencies. But when it came to examples of the pamphlets, brochures and fact sheets interdicted by the new order, what did the Administration cite? Expensive Pentagon handouts about new weapons systems? Biographical puff sheets inflating the image of the latest patronage appointee? Not at all.

At a press conference on the new order, Edwin Harper, deputy director of the Office of Management and Budget, did cite some sure-fire laugh-getters at G.O.P. fund-raisers, like "Organic Gardening: Think Mulch," but he also fingered *The Car Book*, a consumer guide to auto buying produced by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. *The Car Book* is a slick-paper, sixty-eight-page brochure that gives comparative ratings for American and foreign cars on maintenance costs, safety and fuel efficiency. Rather than mention that Detroit auto makers are the most vociferous critics of *The Car Book*, Harper produced an unsolicited letter from a John Q. Taxpayer in Cincinnati complaining that it represented an unnecessary expense forced on "the already besieged American taxpayer."

Harper neglected to mention, however, the enormous consumer demand for the book. After Joan Claybrook, then head of the N.H.T.S.A., appeared on the *Phil Donahue Show* last year to discuss *The Car Book*, the agency received more than one million orders, and had to go into a second printing to meet the demand. The N.H.T.S.A. is currently receiving 6,000 to 7,000 requests a week for the book. Against the backdrop of a new upward trend in the highway death rate, the controversy over less-safe foreign compact cars and mounting consumer concern about fuel economy and the costs of driving, this useful book would not seem to be an example of the "limited benefit" of government publications—a phrase used by President Reagan in a (ahem) publicity release issued to coincide with Harper's briefing.

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This Administration believes in the Adam Smithian economic man but not, apparently, in the educated consumer.

And under the cost-benefit calculus the White House is imposing on all government regulations, what were the gains to the besieged American taxpayers of the sixteen-page illustrated program, signed by Nancy Reagan, that was distributed at the White House Easter egg hunt? Perhaps that was a part of the Reagan campaign to restore the old-time American verities—in this case, belief in the Easter Bunny.

Victory's Lessons

It is Ernest Lefever's way to impugn the motives of those who disagree with him or who oppose him. That aspect of his character was manifest in the statements he made to the press after the Senate Foreign Relations Committee voted 13 to 4 against his confirmation as Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs. The one-sidedness of the vote made it clear that he would be rejected by the full Senate, thus forcing his withdrawal. His hostility to promoting human rights as an aspect of American foreign policy was the primary cause of his defeat, but his penchant for suggesting that his opponents were Communists or Communist-inspired ran a close second. That is another reason to celebrate the vote by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Ernest Lefever is not the only seeker of power in Washington these days to indulge in such nasty habits, and it is good to see him get his comeuppance for it.

Testifying before a subcommittee of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs two years ago, Lefever managed to encapsulate in a single sentence his views on human rights and his way of attacking those with different opinions. "American zealots," he told the members of Congress, "invoke the human-rights standard not to advance freedom, but as a cloak to attack anti-totalitarian allies or even to promote Marxist regimes." That statement, and many others like it, insured that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee would examine his candidacy more closely than is customary for a nominee to a third-level position. Even so, had Lefever not performed so badly while his nomination was being considered, he almost certainly would have been confirmed.

Two members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee played key roles in rejecting Lefever: the committee chairman, Charles Percy, Republican of Illinois, and the ranking minority member, Claiborne Pell, Democrat of Rhode Island. Neither started out as an opponent. Both were disposed to let the President have an appointee of his own choosing. While both are men of decent instincts, neither is noted for rocking any boats. The two Senators have demonstrated a concern for human rights, but neither is regarded as a crusader. It is impossible to know exactly what led them to oppose Lefever, but some glimpses I had of them during the confirmation process enable me to speculate.

Along with three colleagues from the United States Helsinki Watch Committee, I met with Senator Percy in March to discuss the Lefever nomination. We had just come from a meeting with Lefever—whom Percy had not yet met—and Percy was eager to get our impressions. At the same time, he was entirely noncommittal. I came away thinking that there was little chance that the new chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, who had an opportunity to play an important role in shaping American foreign policy, would risk estranging himself from his own party's President over the nomination of an Assistant Secretary of State.

Senator Percy and Ernest Lefever did meet prior to the confirmation hearings. It seems likely that what transpired was crucial in making Percy oppose confirmation. At the hearing, Percy questioned Lefever about what was said when they met. Why did Lefever characterize the opposition to his confirmation as "Communist-inspired" and as "orchestrated" by Communists? At first, Lefever denied he had used the word "Communism." Percy's voice rose—the only time I have ever seen him display anger at any hearing: "There isn't any question that you used the word 'Communism' to me. There is the White House staff sitting right behind you who was sitting with us, and a staff member of mine was sitting there. You used the word 'Communism' in connection with the opposition, and you did so to Senator Tsongas, and you did so in a separate conversation to our counsel, Charles Berk. There is no question of fact." Lefever waffled, said that *Izvestia* and a Dutch Communist newspaper, *Die Warheit*, were opposed to him (as if any position they took mattered), and divided the rest of his opponents into "people and organizations . . . generally opposed to the mainstream of American foreign policy for the last fifteen or so years, defense policy, intelligence policy and so on"; "another group of people who support revolutionary Marxist violence" and "honest people who differ with the methods of the new Administration." He quickly

NO MORE WITCH HUNTS?

On Friday, June 19, a series of events will be held in cities across the nation under the general theme "No More Witch Hunts!" These come at a time of ferment on the left, centered around the extent of the threat posed by increasing efforts—private and governmental—to make dissent disloyal. Certainly, efforts to curb the Freedom of Information Act, the new Security and Terrorism Subcommittee, the rhetoric of "terrorism" and "disinformation" and the trend toward the national security state have rightly aroused concern. So whether you believe the hour is late or that protests are premature anti-McCarthyism, we urge you to participate. Cities with activities planned include New York, Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, Houston, Albuquerque, N.M., Burlington, Vt., St. Louis, New Haven, Washington, Amherst, Mass., and Toledo, Ohio.

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qualified his reference to this last group by asserting that "there are people who have used human rights as a facade to promote certain political ideologies," and he said they opposed him. At the completion of this exchange, I thought it likely that Percy would vote against Lefever's confirmation.

Percy's exchange with Lefever took place on Monday, May 18, the first day of the confirmation hearings. The previous Friday afternoon, along with four other human-rights activists (or "zealots," as Lefever might call us), I met with Senator Pell. He was firm in telling us that he was not committed, spoke of his inclination to let the President have the appointee of his choice and even defended Lefever against some of the things we said. Pell was leaving Washington for the weekend right after our meeting and was taking along a copy of Jacobo Timerman's just-published book, *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number*. The subject was of great interest to Pell, both because it involved human rights in Argentina (Pell had twice extracted a pledge from President Viola of Argentina to publish an accounting of those who had "disappeared"; Viola subsequently repudiated the pledges) and because it involved anti-Semitism (Pell takes pride in his father's role at Nuremberg and in drawing up the Genocide Convention).

Pell evidently read the book over the weekend, for he repeatedly displayed it at the Monday hearings while questioning Lefever closely on human-rights abuses in Argentina. In particular, Pell wanted to know what part Lefever had played in shaping the Reagan Administration's position on continuing the U.N. Human Rights Commission's working group on disappearances [see editorial, "Lefever Strikes," *The Nation*, March 14]. Although Pell pressed the question, Lefever was evasive; he also refused to acknowledge that Argentina abuses human rights. He did say that he opposed making the working group's reports public. That evening Pell attended a small dinner for Timerman, who happened to be in Washington in connection with his book. At that dinner, which was given by Random House president Robert Bernstein, Timerman's publisher as well as chairman of the U.S. Helsinki Watch Committee, Pell admitted that he was "less uncommitted" than he had been prior to the start of the hearings.

As has been widely publicized, Lefever's candidacy was also damaged by the apparent conflict of interest in his solicitation and acceptance of contributions from Nestlé and other infant-formula manufacturers at a time when the Ethics and Public Policy Center he headed was conducting a campaign to discredit the World Council of Churches' boycott of Nestlé products. My own view is that the conflict-of-interest question played only a minor part in Lefever's rejection. First and foremost, he was defeated because of his views on human rights and, secondarily, because he tried to smear those who differ with him. His defeat on those grounds has important consequences. It demonstrates that there is a more formidable constituency for human rights in this country than the Reagan Administration realized. Indeed, the Administration's stand on human rights and the nomination of Ernest Lefever have done much to make that constituency aware of its own clout and to encourage it to coalesce. Lefever's defeat also demonstrates that smear tactics are likely to backfire.

ARYEH NEIER

Aryeh Neier, a member of The Nation*'s Editorial Board, is adjunct professor of law at New York University and director of the New York Institute for the Humanities.*

ARTICLES.

RESPECTABILITY CONFERRED

Did the Aspen Institute 'Front' For the Shah?

WILLIAM A. DORMAN

Nobody knew exactly what it all meant. But Americans told each other just to wait until it was all over, then we'd find out why the helicopters crashed in the desert, why we went in and failed or why we didn't go in earlier or why we went in at all, why our friends didn't do more, who was to blame. There were plenty of questions, but people seemed to agree that we couldn't talk about it much until the hostages were freed—then we could demand and get answers.

But when it was over . . . there were few questions raised and no answers volunteered. Almost nobody examined the points of decision or even asked what they were, although they were plain enough to see. . . . The decision [for example] to support, over decades, a man who turned out to be detested by his people. The decision to let him into the United States—compassion or stupidity?

—A.M. Rosenthal, "America in Captivity,"
The New York Times Magazine, *May 17*

If an agenda of inquiry is ever drawn up on U.S.-Iranian relations before the revolution, near the top should be a close and hard look at the selling of the Shah in the United States. How could a man so hated by his own people have enjoyed such a favorable image in the United States?

The answer possibly lies in the process by which the American intellectual establishment confers respectability on Third World client regimes. Unlike the transfer of arms and technology, this is a subtle and complex legitimization; it is more the result of congenial values and coinciding interests than any sinister conspiracies. A case study of how this conferral of legitimacy works is the relationship of the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies to Iran under the

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late Shah, an association that included most of the elements characteristic of the transfer of respectability: good intentions, prominent names, impeccable reputations and, of course, money.

Newsweek once characterized the Aspen Institute as a global forum of idea-mongering. Author-journalist Peter Schrag has suggested that Aspen's elitist "thought leading to action" programs, "infested with Council on Foreign Relations people and relationships," are designed to support the liberal establishment. Other critics have dismissed the institute as little more than an ineffectual group of intellectuals with pretensions to having an impact on the world of ideas and public policy who have actually succeeded only in having a fine time and in convincing foundations to pony up more money so the institute can prosper and expand.

All this may or may not be true, but the cultural exchange with Iran was a different matter. According to an early expression of Aspen's interest in Iran, "The institute is convinced that it is central to its objectives and its international mission to facilitate the opening up of dialogue among leaders of thought and action on the critical human and social issues of our time. An assessment of how Iran can build a better future while preserving the best of its past is vital to this dialogue." The statement also included the expectation that Aspen might assist in "providing Iranians with new modes of outreach and new opportunities for international contact, enriching non-Iranians through their associations with Iran and uniting Iranians and non-Iranians alike in consideration of the major global problems that plague our increasingly interdependent world."

Providing "new modes of outreach," of course, is never a simple or inexpensive task. Aspen accepted $750,000 of the Shah's money to accomplish the job, an arrangement that raises some questions as to just what Iran and Aspen were about. For example, were the Pahlevis truly interested in a cultural exchange and in opening up dialogue for their money or, a more likely possibility, were they simply hiring an intellectual escort service that would provide a measure of legitimacy for a corrupt and crumbling regime? Perhaps more important, what did programs such as Aspen's contribute to our clouded vision and deeply flawed responses at the critical moments of the Iranian revolution and hostage affair?

The first link between Aspen and Iran was forged in 1974 when Empress Farah Pahlevi joined the institute as an honorary trustee, and Fereydoun Hoveyda, Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, was named a special adviser. This was at a time when the brutal political reality of the Pahlevi regime was creating rebellion at home and attracting unwanted attention abroad from such groups as the International Commission of Jurists, the International Red Cross and Amnesty International, whose head, Martin Ennals, was quoted as saying that "no country in the world has a worse record in human rights than Iran." The Shah and his ruling class were rolling in quadrupled oil revenues following the 1973-74 oil embargo, but they yearned for respectability, an entrée into polite society, a place where up-and-coming Iranian technocrats might mingle with certified intellects and doyens of Western culture. Enter the Aspen Institute, among others.

If the ex-Shah was indeed shopping for an internationalized Bohemian Grove, he could have done no better than the institute. The outgrowth of a Goethe bicentennial celebration at Aspen, Colorado, in 1949, the institute prospered from its earliest beginnings. An annual conference on design was followed by a fall photography conference which drew the likes of Eliot Porter and Dorothea Lange, a screen classics program, an internationally famed music festival, a health center designed to keep the body in shape to fully enjoy the delights of the mind and a center for theoretical physics. The institute's mainstay proved to be the executive seminar, an idea credited to Time Inc.'s Henry Luce. A grand experiment in "leader education," using the great books approach, the twelve-day seminars (which currently cost $4,000 per person) gave thousands of corporate, government and labor leaders a chance to match wits with Plato, Thucydides, Marx, Freud and Senator Robert A. Taft.

In 1957, Robert O. Anderson, now board chairman and principal shareholder of Atlantic Richfield Company and one of the nation's largest individual landowners, became Aspen's president. In 1969, Anderson moved up to chairman of the board and Joseph Slater became Aspen's president. Slater (whose wife once described him as an "intellectual entrepreneur") had served with the Allied High Commission in postwar Germany under John J. McCloy (who, Slater would later say, had been the "dominant figure in my life"), did a stint at the State Department, served as director of the Ford Foundation's International Affairs Program and, at the time of his Aspen appointment, was the president and chairman of the Salk Institute.

Under Slater's guidance, the institute moved strongly in a public policy direction by adding seven "thought leading to action" programs, including international affairs, and established Aspen branches in Berlin and Tokyo. All in all, Aspen was a large-bore operation by 1975, in which occurred its first major undertaking for the Peacock Throne: organization of an international conference in Iran.

The Aspen Institute/Persepolis Symposium, as it was called, opened with a welcoming address by the Empress Farah on a September morning in a magnificent reception tent close by the historic ruins of Persepolis, once the architectural triumph of the Persian King Darius, and the site in 1971 of the ex-Shah's lavish celebration of 2,500 years of monarchy in Iran. The conference was organized and largely staffed by Aspen, but completely paid for by Iran. "We brought together more than 100 leaders from fourteen nations to look at values in transition," Slater recalled recently. A chartered Iran Air 747 flew the American and Euro-

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pean guests to the conference, all expenses paid by Iran.

The list of those who attended included Democratic Representative Les Aspin; former *New York Times* editorial page editor John B. Oakes; author Marya Mannes; Marion Countess Doenhoff, an Aspen trustee and publisher of Germany's *Die Zeit*; Australian Foreign Minister Andrew Peacock; Jack Conway of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees; assorted top-flight corporate executives, and so on. John Gardner, chairman of Common Cause, delivered opening remarks for the American contingent. Slater and chairman Anderson ended the conference by presenting Empress Farah with Aspen's Special Humanistic Award, which she graciously accepted. (Slater denies that the Empress received an award, explaining that a piece of sculpture was given to her "as a token of international protocol." However, in an Aspen publication entitled *Iran—Past, Present and Future*, the presentation of the award and the Empress's response are specifically mentioned. The footnote to her address to the conference reads, in part: "As the Symposium's final act, Aspen Institute Chairman Robert O. Anderson and President Joseph Slater, on behalf of the Institute's trustees, presented the Aspen Institute's Special Humanistic Award to Her Imperial Majesty Farah Pahlevi The Shabanou of Iran.")

According to Slater, Aspen set the agenda and selected the non-Iranian participants. "We were not having a meeting of specialists," Slater said in explaining why only a handful of academic experts on Iran or development had been invited to make the trip. "Our attempt at the institute is to bring together people with a broad perspective; what we look for is wisdom, judgment and curiosity—bright people from any field can ask good questions."

What "good questions" did participants ask at the symposium? What of significance could be learned by nonspecialists in just a week's time spent listening to Iranian officials and scholars, speaking in what was essentially a police state, at sessions sandwiched between receptions and side trips to Isfahan, Shiraz and Teheran? How would these influential opinion leaders put their new knowledge to work? To what end? Interviews with conference participants do not always provide consistent answers.

For example, one retired American diplomat who attended said, "There was some apprehension among the foreign participants that this was just going to be a brainwashing session and there wouldn't be an opportunity to question or criticize, but it soon turned out to be a great deal of questioning and criticism." But another participant, an American expert on Iran, called the conference a classic example of how a country like Iran under the Shah uses an organization like Aspen, and vice versa.

Whatever the truth of the matter, there was little evidence of dissent and criticism at the symposium apparent in the only public document the proceedings produced, *Iran—Past, Present and Future*, which included symposium papers and brief summaries of the discussions they provoked. Some 10,000 copies of the book, paid for by Iran, were published under the institute's imprimatur and, according to its editor, Jane Jacqz, now vice president of Aspen, the volume was not the result of the "careful editing that a commercial publisher might have done; no attempt was made to change its substance or verify facts, check the figures. It was mostly edited," she said, "for comprehensibility in English." For reasons that remain unclear from interviews with Slater and Jacqz, it was a hurry-up job produced in about ten weeks. Slater says the book was merely a "recording of what they [Iranians] thought about themselves; it was not a scholarly book nor well balanced and it was more quantitative than qualitative."

Yet the book, published in both cloth and paperback editions, to all appearances presents itself as precisely what Jacqz and Slater claim it not to be: a scholarly text. While it contains no caveat emptor, it does follow academic style and convention, and is full of development jargon, footnotes, tables and the like, and was advertised along with other Aspen publications on the institute's list.

A statement by American pollster Daniel Yankelovich, whose firm received a contract from the Iranian government to survey American opinion leaders on their views of the Shah's regime, opens the book and sets the mood for what follows. After disarmingly beginning his essay by voicing some of his grave concerns about Iran's modernization plans, he abruptly switches course at midpoint, saying, "Then came Wednesday's meeting . . . and a profound sense of relief. I began to see these impressive, skillful, dedicated young Iranian planners were not ideologues of naïve planning. . . ." Yankelovich concluded by remarking:

> Among nations, human history records relatively few acts of creativity that bring forth a new model of the good society. . . . I feel we have had the rare privilege this week of catching a glimpse of such an act of creativity in the making—something new and unprecedented under the sun. . . . For this gift of renewal, on behalf of all of us, I thank our Iranian hosts.

The good feelings between Iran and the Aspen Institute that characterized the 1975 symposium blossomed the following year into an ongoing relationship that lasted until the revolution in 1978. Under a continuing grant from the Pahlevi Foundation, the institute organized the Aspen/Iran Program and hired the late Charles W. Yost, who attended the Persepolis symposium, to be its coordinator. During a distinguished forty-year foreign service career, Yost had acquired an impressive set of bona fides, serving as U.S. ambassador to Syria and, on his retirement, to the United Nations.

Originally, Aspen was to have received $3 million from the Pahlevi Foundation to run the program, but, according to Moselle Kimbler, Yost's assistant, the financing was of the your-check-is-in-the-mail kind. "This was always the problem with the money we did receive," Kimbler said, "and it was always like pulling teeth to get it in hand." Aspen never received more than $300,000 in each of the three years the program was in existence—a total of $750,000. This was enough to pay the salaries of Yost and

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Kimbler and to fund an office in Washington, complete with direct telex line to the Iranian prime minister's office to facilitate arrangements for the more than eighty Iranian officials and bureaucrats who attended various institute workshops, seminars and symposiums over the life of the program.

"There was always internal discussion about the desirability of associating with Iran," according to Yost, "but I think we felt this exposure of Iranians, many of them of substantial influence, to Western thought in the seminars was likely to work for the things we believed in and advocated."

The rather paternalistic hope that Aspen's professed values would rub off on the Iranian power structure, given the Pahlevis' antipathy to anything resembling democracy and their penchant for coercion, seems in retrospect to be a curiously naïve belief for men of Slater's and Yost's experience. Yet Slater still defends it forcefully. "Do you break off contact with a society [because of human-rights concerns] when you have some chance of affecting its values?" Slater asks. "Where do you draw the line? Do we cut off China, for example? Do we pretend it doesn't exist?"

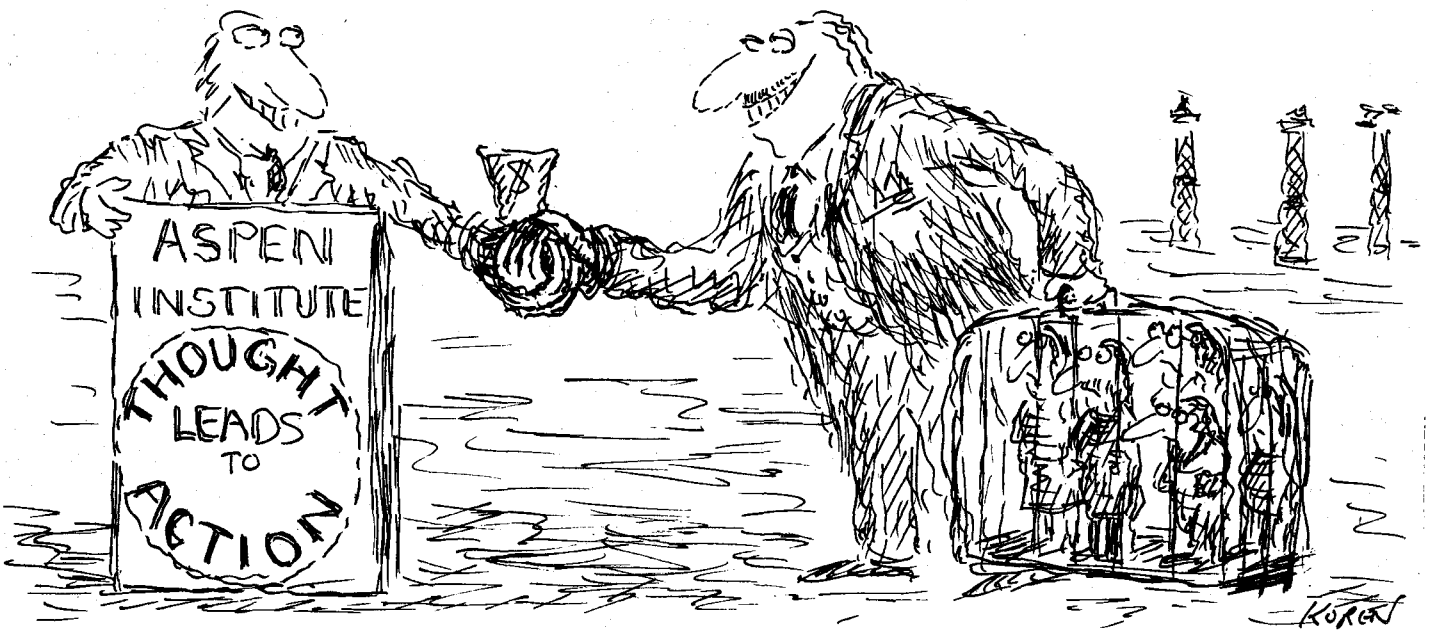
The reasonable answer to these questions, of course, is no. In posing them, however, Slater neatly sidesteps some critical distinctions. For example, what kind of contact are we speaking of? Weeklong convocations paid for by the country in question, at which special awards for humanism are made to a member of the ruling family? Honorary trusteeships? Publication of scholarly-appearing books paid for by the subject country? An ongoing program of exchange paid for with hundreds of thousands of dollars in grant money? Does this sort of activity truly meet the requirements of independent intellectual inquiry? Or was Aspen trafficking in status and engaging in the transfer of respectability and legitimacy to an American client regime that played a major role in U.S. foreign policy and economic good fortune?

Slater does not believe Aspen was performing handmaidenly ideological work for the U.S. foreign policy establishment. But would the institute accept a grant from, say, Castro's Cuba to underwrite a Latin American study program? "Well, no, not as things stand," Slater said.

Aspen's good works on behalf of Iran might be considered essentially harmless, the ineffectual dilettantism of cold-war liberals. It was certainly not alone in according Iran most-favored-nation status. Certainly, it would be difficult to argue that Iran had control over the *content* of Aspen's programs (with the exception of Persepolis), insofar as Aspen's Iran effort after 1975 consisted mainly of one in-house follow-up conference in the United States and of inviting Iranians to attend various workshops, seminars and the like.

But Iranian control is not the central issue here, Aspen's conduct is—particularly the implications of a prestigious institute's hiring out its reputation—if not its soul—to a foreign government. To dismiss lightly Aspen's Iranian connection also discounts the subtle, osmotic impact of the intellectual mainstream on a citizenry's perception of the world. And what of the co-optation of influential American intellectuals, whose critical faculties could not help but be dulled by Aspen's implied legitimization of the Shah's regime?

None of this is to suggest that institutions should not engage in bona fide cultural exchange or study programs with U.S. client states, dictatorships or not; in fact, the intellectual community has a distinct responsibility in this area. What is troublesome, however, is that no ground rules appear to exist for foreign-financed programs of the sort Aspen ran for Iran. What form such guidelines might take—requiring full financial disclosure, for example—is arguable. What seems less debatable is that at a time when a major aspect of U.S. foreign policy was in desperate need of re-examination, a prestigious and influential adjunct of the intellectual community opted for a comfortable nap and may indeed have contributed to the inability of Americans to perceive important truths during both the revolution and the hostage crisis. □



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THE FUND AND THE CENTER

Further Words on The Co-Opting Of Academia

Research Triangle Park, N.C.

Hats off to The Nation *for publishing David F. Noble's marvelous parody of radical thought! ["Corporatist Culture Ministries," March 21.] When I began reading I supposed that it was a serious piece. But it quickly became evident that by stringing together non sequiturs, farfetched analogies and intimations of persecution, Professor Noble was actually composing a diabolically adroit spoof of left-wing reasoning.*

At times, I thought he overreached himself. It may not have been clear to all of his readers that in saying that "Most of the Fellows at the center are politically conservative senior scholars," he was telling a palpable falsehood. But Noble's method is transparent in other places, as when he glosses over the fact that the German Marshall Fund, portrayed as a sinister right-wing scheme, took only a few weeks to give him money for a project to help unions, sponsored "progressive causes" like consumer advocacy and "citizen action groups of all kinds" and staged a gathering of the Institute for Democratic Socialism. No less ingenious was his utilization of the fact that William Bennett, director of the National Humanities Center, was identified with a report calling for the depoliticization of the humanities as an integral part of an argument that Bennett and the center were politicizing the humanities.

Noble shows a most whimsical capacity for mishandling evidence. Best of all was his resort to guilt by association. It was remarkable to see Duke University's president Terry Sanford, for a generation the target of conservative zealots in North Carolina, identified solely as a director of I.T.T., but that was not nearly so droll as Noble's pointing out that Frank Stanton is president of the Visiting Committee of Harvard's Kennedy School, whose dean is a Trilateral Commission member. (The possibilities here for guilt by juxtaposition are limitless. Just think: "David F. Noble, who admits to having taught at Duke University, headed by the I.T.T. director Terry Sanford . . ." Hilarious!)

Frequently in an article of this sort, a writer denies what he is doing at the same time he is doing it, but Noble should not have put ideas in his readers' heads by saying: "It might be argued that the analysis presented here is too simplistic, too one-dimensional." Such a lampoon of self-abnegation is not really necessary. I take it, though, that every effective satire has a sober moral purpose, and I assume that Noble intended his essay to serve as a warning against reckless political assaults. Let's see more contributions by him. He has an extraordinary gift for burlesque.

William E. Leuchtenburg, Senior Fellow
National Humanities Center

Research Triangle Park, N.C.

In his generally disingenuous account of the National Humanities Center, David F. Noble labels its project on energy and values "an industrial study," presumably because it is supported (in part) by industrial firms interested in having "corporate propaganda" made by seemingly disinterested scholars. He adds a disclaimer, in parentheses, rather like the notice inserted in cigarette advertisements to warn the reader that there is a Surgeon General out there with a concern for the whole truth: "I have been assured that the work of the project in no way reflects its origin or funding and that participants were selected purely on scholarly grounds."

As one of the participants, I can assure you that if Noble had taken the trouble to visit the center while he was teaching at Duke University and concocting this fantasy, he could have learned that neither its origin nor its aims nor its actual functioning are as he imagines. If anything, the industrial firms which have provided funds for the project deserve far more credit for protecting its integrity than The Nation *does for publishing such a tendentious description of it.*

Your readers deserve to know how an editor who has written a book roundly condemning those who collaborated with McCarthyism can justify his own readiness to propagate smears damaging to the reputations of others, based on patently flimsy evidence and ludicrously contorted, guilt-by-association linkages. ("Nestled in the woods of the Research Triangle Park, the . . . center is strategically situated" to serve "its major role—that of a highbrow corporate public relations outfit" promoting the "planetary humanism" of the Trilateral Commission.) Cohn and Schine, meet Navasky and Noble.

Sanford A. Lakoff, Fellow
National Humanities Center

Research Triangle Park, N.C.

In his article, "Corporatist Culture Ministries," David F. Noble suggests that the National Humanities Center has somehow been corrupted by the funding it has received from various corporations. Since Noble presents no substantive evidence for this conclusion, a detailed review of his scurrilous piece would be pointless. However, to set the record straight, a few observations are in order.

First, although some of the center's activities do address public policy, these issues are not its main concern. Of the internal seminars which meet regularly, only the energy seminar deals primarily with policy. The other seminars—literary interpretation, biography and the idea of a profession—do not; neither do the projects of the vast majority of the Fellows. The center certainly does not exist to promote "planetary humanism," whatever that is. And there is no reason to believe that any participant in the energy seminar was chosen on any basis besides the merit of his proposal.

Second, since corruption suggests coercion, it may be helpful to mention the atmosphere at the center. Viewed from the inside, the center is a place where open discussion

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is encouraged. A wide variety of political viewpoints are represented; it is simply false that "Most of the Fellows are politically conservative senior scholars. . . ." Inquiry is entirely free, and no one is ever pressured, blatantly or subtly, to take any position on any issue.

There is, finally, the matter of the politics of those who run and support the center—of William Bennett, the trustees and the donors. Each of these individuals and groups has a political position, and some of these are obviously not on Noble's approved list. But so what? The center's success in supporting excellence depends not on the politics of those who run it but on their integrity. Nothing that Noble has said suggests that their decisions are anything but impartial. It says something about Noble's own integrity that he is unable to appreciate this point.

Claire Gaudiani, John Opie,
George Sher and Edith Wyschogrod
Fellows, National Humanities Center

DAVID F. NOBLE

Reading these letters one would hardly guess that I never mentioned, much less maligned, these people in my article. Why the exaggerated defensive responses, the vehement vindictiveness? My article was about two organizations—the German Marshall Fund (G.M.F.) and the National Humanities Center (N.H.C.)—now engaged in what I called the Cultural War. I argued that, in different ways, these agencies were serving corporate interests by shaping cultural and political discourse, and that they were using some of us in the process. My intention was to foster some healthy reflection about the aims and methods of these corporate sponsors of scholarship, not to attack those who have received their support—indeed, I acknowledged that I had myself. Repeatedly I stressed that my aim was higher, toward the people who set up, direct and make policy for these institutions. Still, the authors of these letters, out of innocence, guilt, or some combination of the two, are convinced that I was attacking them. I was not, nor will I now. They were not important enough to discuss the first time around and they still are not. And we ought not let their attack shift our attention away from their sponsors, the corporate foundations which continue to shape policy, debate and even opposition. Why is it so difficult to have this important discussion?

To begin with, conventions of respectable discourse, however much they contradict our experience, rest on the assumption that each individual is autonomous, basically well-intentioned and unwitting (almost somnambulistic), and that things happen pretty much by accident. To hint that things are otherwise is tactless, for to suggest that people work together for common ends, that they have plans and organizations and purposes, is to hold them responsible and accountable, and that could be embarrassing (even dangerous). It's not polite. This established etiquette is reinforced and dignified in intellectual analysis of society. Here everyday explanations for ordinary occurrences which involve real people in familiar social situations—the world as we know it from our real-life experience—are disdained as improper and crude. In their place are substituted stupefyingly sophisticated explanations, elaborate abstractions and theories that, on the one hand, require a faith in chance that borders on a belief in miracles but which, on the other, preserve anonymity and cause no embarrassment. "Free inquiry" of this sort is encouraged, at the N.H.C. and elsewhere, precisely because it does not help anyone understand the world we live in, including the world in which such "free inquiry" takes place. We get so smart we get stupid.

A few weeks ago I took part in a little local demonstration to protest, along with other consumers, some bad policies of a supermarket chain. It was not an earth-shattering event, just our way of shaping the course of our world. There we were, standing at the store entrance with our signs and leaflets and petitions (we also had issued press releases, written articles and done some lobbying), when one particularly irate customer looked up while signing the petition and said, "This is wonderful! Tell me, how did you people ever pull something like this together?" The question surprised me. Well, I explained, it was pretty simple, really. Lucy called me (it was her idea) and I called Joe and Al while Lucy got in touch with some others. We didn't just pull the names out of the phone book at random, of course; we called people we knew would be sympathetic, people we had worked with before, people with whom we shared a general outlook. Then we held a meeting at Al's house to decide what to do and that's when Al's roommate Bill joined in (later, Joe's wife decided to participate too). We discussed who would do what, what our message would be and the time and place for the demonstration. And, well, miracle of miracles, here we are, as planned.

Now, suppose that woman asked her question in the pages of *The Nation* and offered my response as the explanation. I imagine that she too would be charged with mounting "scurrilous" attacks, resorting to "smears," "ludicrously contorted, guilt-by-association linkages," "far-fetched analogies," "fantasy," "flimsy evidence." This would be especially true if she used this same method of analysis in describing the supermarket management's counter-campaign. But, of course, her explanation—describing people, plans, networks, shared purposes—is accurate; it accounts for the world as we all know it to be, from our own experience and from watching the behavior of others. But such a plausible explanation is ruled out of order by the conventions of respectable discourse and the norms of intellectual sophistry. I think this is silly, and that we should stop it. Social analysis should build upon what we already know from experience, not deny that experience in order to construct an artificial world.

My point of departure in trying to understand the G.M.F. and the N.H.C., then, is to assume that the people who set up and run those operations go about their business pretty

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much the same way as my friends and I. Like us, they want to shape events to suit their interests. They too have agendas, plans; they too have networks and common experiences to draw upon. They differ from us only in the resources available to them (for example, we had $10, the G.M.F. has $10 million; we used leaflets, the corporate demonstrators use *Time* magazine), the scale of their operations and, of course, their different purposes. But theirs is also a small world of personal relationships, which is why we see the same faces again and again, of bankers, corporate executives, foundation directors and corporate "educators." They are powerful and rich, to be sure, but, given the ambitious scope of their efforts, there are nowhere near enough of them to go around, to do everything. Which is why they hire us to do it for them. And why it is important for us to understand who they are and what it is they are trying to get us to do.

The "progressive" G.M.F., whose trustees include some of the world's most powerful financiers, supports scholars and social activists, and their organizations. It is a vehicle for securing research and (through unwitting scholars) information vital to global corporate operations, and for co-opting potentially dangerous oppositional activities by steering them in more responsible directions. While supporting labor efforts to deal with computer technologies, for example, the G.M.F. flatly refused to permit rank-and-file control of the projects, insisting instead upon a top-down approach. But this is not to say that all top-down projects are good enough for the G.M.F. progressives. When, in response to a G.M.F. initiative, top-level officials of the International Association of Machinists proposed a project which would have brought together workers from different countries (all of whom work for the same company, Westinghouse) to begin to develop international collective bargaining strategies, the G.M.F. declined. More recently, the California Rural Legal Assistance Agency (C.R.L.A.), one of the country's most effective legal assistance services, which has been helping the poor, small-operation farmers and farm workers in California for one and a half decades and is now facing elimination because of proposed Federal cutbacks in the Legal Services Corporation, submitted a proposal to the G.M.F. for a study of the social effects of industrialized agriculture. The proposed study-team of lawyers and social scientists was to have served as both analyst and advocate to give the poor a voice in such pressing issues as pesticides, the creation of a transient workforce and the large-scale mechanization of agriculture, all areas in which the C.R.L.A. has had much experience and all areas requiring much attention. Yet, here too, the G.M.F. flatly rejected the proposal without a hearing. Why? What are the G.M.F.'s criteria? And what exactly is their agenda? The same thing must be asked of the N.H.C., which, I suggested, uses the benign authority of the humanities to legitimate corporate propaganda. I described the corporate links and quoted at length from the N.H.C.'s own published reports. In particular, I described the center's three-year project on Energy and the Values of American Democracy, funded by Westinghouse, and the Committee for Energy Awareness (C.E.A.), a nuclear power industry public relations front set up after the accident at Three Mile Island, which has already spent $10 million in two years to influence public opinion. I drew my own conclusions about this project and these have since been confirmed now that I have had the opportunity to listen to Prof. Sanford Lakoff's contribution to this effort.

The N.H.C. puts together a radio program, appropriately entitled "SOUNDINGS: Putting Ideas into Circulation"; it is distributed nationally on public radio by the Public Affairs Broadcast Group of Los Angeles. In a recent broadcast, Lakoff discussed the impact of energy shortages on American democracy. On the show, Lakoff is identified as a member of the energy project but no mention is made of either C.E.A. or Westinghouse. In speaking about the causes of the energy problem, Lakoff raises blaming the victim to an art form. "Everybody's at fault"—government, consumers, citizens. But not the oil companies. They were perhaps "imprudent," but only because they were compelled by government to rely upon imported oil. "I don't think it's profitable for us to spend time looking for a villain," Lakoff advises. We're all to blame. The solution? Incentives to industry, decontrol of prices, less government regulation. "We are not likely to pursue a socialist approach," like "rigid planning" and "nationalization of the oil industry," this self-anointed expert on American values observes. These are "not congenial with our values." Instead, we need a heightened "energy consciousness" (energy awareness?) and a "national consensus." We must foster a greater reliance upon "recognized professionalism" and our established "representative institutions" instead of controversy and confrontation politics. Democracy is fragile, Lakoff reminds us, and too much of it can lead to chaos and, ultimately, dictatorship.

In order to preserve democracy and our "pluralistic society," Lakoff preaches moderation and respect for authority. Predictably, his central example of the excess of democracy (to borrow a phrase) is the debate over nuclear power. "I myself think," Lakoff intimates, "that the issue of nuclear power is a serious test for a democratic society." Controversy over this issue, he implies, not only injures industry and exacerbates our energy problems, it also constitutes a grave threat to democracy itself. For Lakoff, it is not corporate control over our resources, our government, our airwaves (and our humanists) that constitutes a serious threat to democracy but rather popular opposition to corporate control. You can be sure if it's Westinghouse.

To those who follow the business press and corporate propaganda activities, there is nothing surprising about Lakoff's analysis. He was not told what to say, to be sure; he was hired because he could be relied upon to say the right things and he worked out his thoughts with like-minded people. For the same reason I called my friend Joe, and that is also why Lucy called me. We trusted one another; we knew we thought the same way about things and could come up

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with a leaflet we could agree upon. There is nothing mysterious about such "convergence." This is simply the way the world works, a world we all know well. I think it is time we started addressing ourselves to that world, because important things are happening there, things we could all understand if we allowed ourselves to use our common sense. People like Lakoff are merely playing their small assigned part in the larger corporate effort to shape public consciousness and debate and, through these, public policy, the course of events. This effort must be identified for what it is, understood in real terms and reckoned with accordingly. For not only does it give the hired humanists their identity, it also shapes the world in which we all must live. □

SOCIAL DEMOCRATS ADRIFT

Showdown Time For Schmidt

NORMAN BIRNBAUM

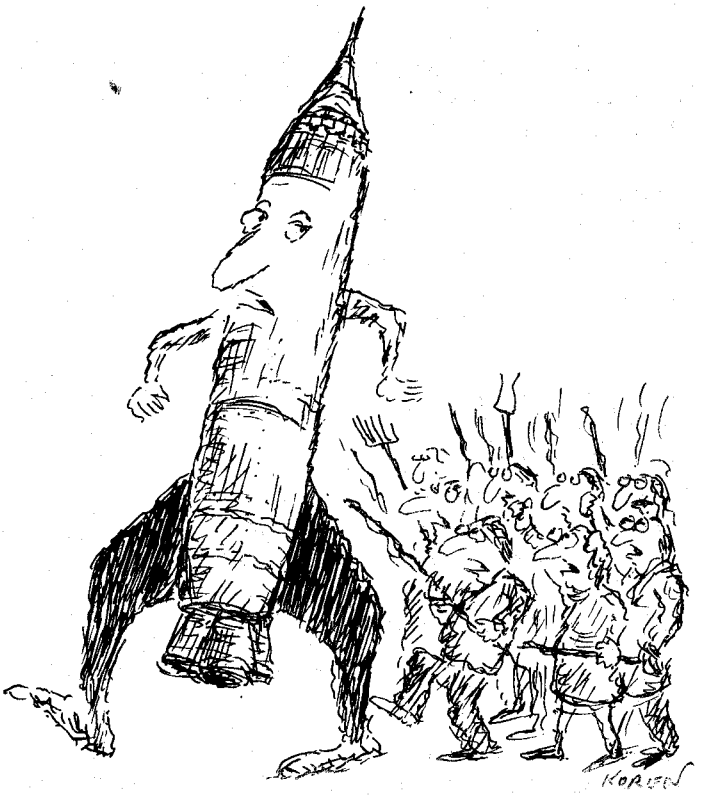
Helmut Schmidt, once a defense minister, clearly knows his military history. He appears to have adopted the tactics of the celebrated Napoleonic Marshal. "My right is shattered, my center is in retreat, my left is crumbling: I attack." By threatening to resign if negotiations between the Soviet Union and the United States on limiting Eurostrategic missiles do not succeed, he is confronting all of his interlocutors. If he should leave, the Social Democrats, and restive opinion in Germany generally, will have to reckon with a new government decidedly not to their liking. The superpowers will have to deal with a Federal Republic in untried hands. The United States will have to worry about a radicalized Social Democratic Party (S.P.D.), about a debate on the Atlantic alliance in Germany's streets. The Soviet Union must envisage the unpleasant prospect of a return to power by the most vociferously anti-Soviet segments of the German political spectrum.

The outcome of Schmidt's recent visit to Washington suggests that the Reagan Administration, for its part, is serene. Schmidt went back to Europe empty-handed. The President, like Secretary Alexander Haig at the Rome NATO meeting, agreed to conduct negotiations with the Soviet Union on Eurostrategic missiles parallel to their deployment. Our government, however, did not advance the date for negotiations—or even set a definite one. There has been no change in our declared intention to drop SALT II—which may render negotiations on Eurostrategic weapons impossible. Schmidt was reduced to declaring on American television (and before the Bundestag) that President Ronald Reagan intends serious negotiations with the Soviet Union. He also described himself as a "messenger boy" with a message for President François Mitterrand in Paris.

When he returned home, Germans gave the Chancellor a reception that was far from triumphal. Most commentators asked a question to which they obviously had an answer: was this trip necessary? Leonid Brezhnev is coming to Bonn in September. Willy Brandt will be going to Moscow this month—but it is difficult to see what he can accomplish when Schmidt has left negotiations to Haig and Reagan. The Soviet position has its own rigidities, and even when negotiations commence, they will be difficult. Meanwhile, the German political situation is likely to become both more tense and more immobile.

The Social Democrats have lost an election in what was once their unconquerable stronghold, West Berlin. They lost because of their own corruption and mediocrity, but also because a coalition to their left took 7 percent of the total vote and made inroads among the young and educated who usually vote for the S.P.D. The faction, called the Alternative List, is an amalgam of community-control advocates, environmentalists, foreign policy dissenters and representatives of the German counterculture—all well implanted in the cities. The Social Democrats' partner in the government, the Free Democrats, barely got a reduced parliamentary group back into the Town Hall. If the Social Democrats, in state and national elections, begin to lose votes consistently to groupings to their left, and if the Free Democrats continue to exhibit so indistinct a profile as to risk political elimination, then of course the present opposition could inherit power.

What happened in Berlin, however, is more indicative of an ambiguous future. The opposition Christian Democratic



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Union (C.D.U.) is Germany's largest single party but cannot command a majority. The Free Democrats as a party rejected urgings from the party leadership either to change sides and join a coalition with the C.D.U. or to allow the C.D.U. to rule as a minority government. Breakaway Free Democrats, however, support the C.D.U.—a situation of maximum confusion. Washington foreign policy makers assume that, nationally, the Free Democrats can alter their allegiance with more or less difficulty. The Berlin example and the national discussion to which it has given rise suggest that the difficulty may be more and not less. A good many Free Democratic voters are members of the educated middle class who dislike the authoritarianism and cultural conservatism of the Christian parties. Others are convinced supporters of the policy of détente with Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The party campaigned in the 1980 elections for a continuation of its present coalition with the S.P.D. In the Konrad Adenauer era, it courted disappearance when it acquired a reputation for systematic opportunism—repeatedly campaigning against Adenauer in the elections and serving under him in government. The Germans have coined a pseudo-therapeutic term to describe one course open to the Free Democrats: *Schamfrist*, waiting a decent interval, after which the change can come.

Of course, Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, the party's leader, appears to be a firm supporter of unequivocal alignment with the United States. He has not hesitated to deplore the Social Democrats' foreign policy disagreements. A master politician, he has used his position to exact concessions on other issues. An effort by Genscher to lead his party into another coalition on foreign policy grounds might well split his own party: his own views do not command the unanimous support of Free Democratic voters, party members and parliamentarians. At a recent national Free Democratic Party congress, he had to threaten to resign to win a 7-to-3 victory over the group opposed to his stand on missiles. Genscher is no less beleaguered than Schmidt. The most reasonable prediction is that the present coalition will stagger along—at least until the S.P.D. Party congress next year. Schmidt may threaten to play Samson, but the fact is that a good deal of the temple is already in ruins.

The economy is not growing and the mark is weakening, not least due to high American interest rates. A cheaper mark will not necessarily result in more exports, since other economies are also declining. Meanwhile, Germany's oil imports have to be paid for with more expensive dollars. The federal budget is strained. Defense cost overruns are beginning to attain Pentagon-like dimensions, and American demands for more defense expenditures cannot all be refused. Our own Secretary of Defense, apparently unclear about the limits of his writ, instructed the Germans recently to reduce social expenditures by 25 percent. He had as much success as if he had asked Schmidt to set the Bundeswehr on the march to Paris. Internal limits, however, menace the social budget.

The Social Democratic-Free Democratic coalition has several major points of friction, foreign policy aside. One is the future of worker participation in the management of the iron and steel industry's firms. Another is the question of social benefits and yet another the issue of taxes. The Free Democrats have insisted on sheltering their voters (farmers, small business and officialdom) from the austerity they demand of the S.P.D.'s main supporters, the industrial and white-collar labor force. A new S.P.D. deputy, and a former leader of the Young Socialists, Gerhard Schroeder, asked Schmidt recently what was the point of remaining in office when the Free Democrats made economic policy and the Americans foreign policy? He was speaking for a far broader range of opinion in the party than himself.

The present governing coalition's momentum has long since been spent. Its problem at the moment is to conserve rather than extend its achievements in *Ostpolitik*. With the worsening new economy, the preservation rather than the development of the welfare state is again the issue. The S.P.D., which incarnated and realized so many hopes in the years 1966 to 1976, has run out of ideas. Its record gives us a measure of the distance it (and Federal Germany with it) has come. It was the S.P.D. which, after the war, was the major representative of the German democratic tradition. (Many of the postwar Christian Democratic and Christian Social leaders were repentant Nazis or fellow travelers.) The famous *Spiegel* affair of 1962, in which Adenauer and his defense minister, Franz-Josef Strauss, seized the weekly's files, was the first major postwar test of German democracy. When the S.P.D., supported by the media and public opinion, chased Strauss from office, they anticipated the party's later electoral victories under Willy Brandt. It is true that the Social Democrats' accession to government was accompanied by quite extraordinary turbulence. An extra-parliamentary opposition coalesced to their left, and later an ugly wave of terrorism threatened to provoke extreme repression in public life. What has been extraordinary is the extent to which the S.P.D. has been able to elicit fresh impulses from the vicissitudes of German democracy. It is that capacity, alas, which is now in obvious disrepair.

The coalition of groups from which the Social Democrats have traditionally drawn their support is now threatening to fall apart. Industrial workers (and increasingly, white-collar workers) thought of its economic and social policies as their own. The intelligentsia, including many of the young, were drawn to figures like Willy Brandt and the late President Gustav Heinemann; they were anti-Nazis, antiauthoritarian and had a vision of a different society. A good many middle-class Protestants (Heinemann was one) were increasingly drawn to a party that offered a more modern social Christianity than the nominally Christian parties. All appreciated the Social Democrats' unequivocal devotion to civil liberties and democracy.

Then, the rise of an extra-parliamentary opposition in the 1960s, the debate over terrorism of the 1970s, the more recent development of an alternative movement, all opened deep fissures in the Social Democratic community. Pragmatists and utopians, reformists and revolutionaries,

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votaries of parliamentary institutions and advocates of direct democracy, clashed on every significant issue. Today's disputes on nuclear energy and on the bureaucratization of party, state and society mirror these conflicts.

Generally, the industrial working class and the white-collar labor force support the center and right of the party. These solid citizens are often repelled by the culture and rhetoric of the left, by its tumultuous tactics, by its willingness to demonstrate. Generational conflicts also play a role in these antagonisms. The more reflective of the S.P.D. leaders (Brandt, as we might expect, but also younger figures like the Mayor of Berlin, Hans-Joachim Vogel, and the new party manager, Peter Glotz) have warned that an opening to the young is long overdue. The Berlin election results and the continuing strength of the alternative movement suggest that the party has failed to sublimate the passions of the avant-garde. Some of its former leaders are in Parliament; the followers remain on the streets. It would be a mistake to underestimate the potential influence of the alternative movement on German opinion and the S.P.D.

Meanwhile, a development within the union movement promises conflict on a more important front. The "German model" of economic and social development rested on close collaboration of business, government and the unions. A new program approved by the German trade unions calls for much more worker participation in management, more economic planning and public investment than the system has hitherto entailed, and the creation of a new public sector. If the unions press their demands, business will resist—strenuously. The radicalization of one of the West's most powerful union movements is possible—in which case, a rather different "German model" will be aligned with the new French one.

For the moment, this is a possibility and nothing more. What is actual is the conceptual impasse into which the S.P.D. has wandered; the party lacks intellectual vitality. It is unable to go back to its period of programmatic prosperity and has little to say in changed circumstances. As a result, many of its leaders now seem resigned to a period in opposition.

The S.P.D. may be at a conceptual impasse; the opposition is on a rimless ideological plateau. One initial point merits clarification. The Christian Democratic Union and the Christian Social Union present themselves in this country as more American than ourselves. They have certainly used the division within the S.P.D. on the question of NATO rearmament as a club with which to beat the ruling coalition. The S.P.D.'s answer is true: since the debate runs deep in German society, the parties cannot avoid it within their own ranks.

But the opposition does not reject *Ostpolitik*, the improvement of relations with the Soviet bloc. It is impossible to imagine a future Chancellor from its ranks (the pallid Helmut Kohl, let us say, who currently leads the opposition) rising in the Bundestag to make the following declaration:

> Ladies and gentlemen, fellow citizens: we have now taken the steps to restore our American ally's confidence in us, so badly shaken under the government we have replaced. We are going to leave discussions with the Soviet Union entirely to the Americans: no Soviet leader will visit Bonn as long as we are in office. We are increasing defense expenditure and extending the period of military service from fifteen to twenty-four months, while limiting the possibility of young men to do other forms of national service. This will cost money, and so old-age pensions will be cut, contributions for health insurance will have to be raised and educational expenditure reduced. Solidarity with the United States has its cost, of course, and we are asking for the understanding of those workers whose industries will now be restrained from trading with the Soviet Union. Finally, I must tell you that because of the objections to our new policy by the government of the (so-called) German Democratic Republic, the visits of our citizens to their relatives in the other Germany will be substantially reduced.

A caricature? No doubt, but one that no German politician of any party would risk.

The Federal Republic's room for maneuver between the superpowers is not large: a new government would act within the same limits that the present one observes. Indeed,

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the German right has had no aversion to dealing with Russia. There is every reason to think that once in office, Kohl, Strauss and their colleagues will regard Bismarck as a more important source of inspiration than Ronald Reagan. It was Konrad Adenauer, after all, who went to Moscow in 1955 to establish diplomatic relations. He wished to show John Foster Dulles and Dwight Eisenhower that the Federal Republic was capable of a modicum of independence. *Ostpolitik*, in other words, is not merely an invention or preference of the Social Democrats and Free Democrats. It is, especially in the light of Germany's division, a consequence of an interpretation of Germany's national interest which is widely shared. The German conservative politicians who come to our country as members and leaders of the opposition, and who flatter the American right with extravagant declarations of Atlantic loyalty or anti-Soviet tirades, are political con men. None of them would dare to speak in these terms to their own constituencies.

What, then, are the differences between the parties? The Christian parties are conservative, first of all, culturally. They prefer a hierarchical and ordered society, traditional familial and sexual values. They dislike social equality: they have campaigned in the federal states, often successfully, against Social Democratic educational innovations that sought to end the division of children into academic and nonacademic schools early in life. Many parents in the middle levels of society regarded this as dangerous "leveling."

The conservatives also express a generalized dislike, even revulsion, for the culture of the newer German arts, film, literature and theater. They distrust its social criticism, its psychological inquiry, its open disavowal of the conventional esthetics and morality of their own routine culture. For many Germans, the only good poet is a dead poet. In the Weimar Republic, much of Germany looked with horrified fascination at Berlin, the capital of these newer arts. In the Federal Republic, Berlin is everywhere: the smallest town's public theater is likely to enrage the more stolid local *Bürger* at any moment. These attitudes combine with the conviction that the major media, above all the government television networks (there are no commercial channels), are in the hands of "Sozis" (Socialists) or worse. The Christian parties constitute the largest voting bloc in the country. Nevertheless, they have sedulously propagated the notion that, culturally, they speak for a persecuted if healthy minority in a world that is morally sick.

A recent series of studies in Germany, of both the "alternative" culture of the left and "authoritarian" attitudes on the right, suggest that a substantial minority of Germans subscribe to one or the other of these contending world views. Naturally, the Christian parties draw upon an "authoritarian" substratum. Their difficulty is that these values organize around opposition to much in both modern culture and the German historical experience itself. Rather than encouraging adaptation to it, they generate an angry resentment. As a result, the conservative model of society is curiously unconvincing to rather more than half the nation.

On economic issues, the Christian parties have not proclaimed themselves the chosen instruments of large-scale industry. The Christian Democratic Union, indeed, cannot do so for fear of further reducing its shrinking labor following among Catholic unionists. There is, however, an ideological point: the Christian parties' notion of community, however hierarchical, is not based on the predominance of the market. They have criticized the present coalition's budget deficits and excessive welfare expenditure, but they have carefully refrained from advocating the sort of budgetary cuts found in the programs of President Reagan and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. A segment of the opposition, perhaps its most interesting one, is struggling toward a technocratic conservatism—to replace the "social market economy" which accounted for majorities under Adenauer and Ludwig Erhard. The difficulty for the technocrats is that the opposition can hardly increase its vote unless it wins back the Catholic workers (in the Ruhr, especially) who have deserted it for the Social Democrats in millions. Finally, despite the fact that the Christian parties were founded as both Catholic and Protestant, many Protestants recently have settled in the Social Democratic Party or among the Free Democrats. Here, too, the failures of the German Catholic Church to assimilate fully Vatican II may play a role.

I have said that the Christian parties draw upon an authoritarian substratum. Its most vocal exponent, of course, is the Governor of Bavaria, Franz-Josef Strauss. One of the factors making a change of coalitions difficult for the Free Democrats is that Strauss incarnates so much of what they dislike. He has called for martial law to deal with terrorists. The Free Democratic Minister of the Interior, Gerhard Baum, engaged in a dialogue with a repentant terrorist, Horst Mahler, and published it in book form. It is difficult to envisage Baum and Strauss in the same government. Strauss's police forces in Nuremberg recently made a sweep to arrest hundreds of suspected youthful demonstrators. The press, lawyers and judges in the rest of the Federal Republic protested that the action was unconstitutional, in a minor reprise of the *Spiegel* affair. No doubt a new government could attempt to enforce rigid conceptions of law and order, but given the self-confidence and strength of the protesters, it is as likely to provoke prolonged civil tumult as to institute calm.

Tumult, recently, has accompanied the campaign against nuclear power plants and the squatting in vacant houses in major cities. The question of nuclear power so divides the Social Democrats that one of their most promising leaders, Hamburg Mayor Hans-Ulrich Klose, has resigned over the issue; he is a resolute opponent of nuclear plant construction. Thus far, demonstrations on the question of missiles and nuclear weapons have been far calmer, although some of them have been enlivened by the presence of a good many uniformed soldiers as participants. It would be a mistake to underestimate the depth and extent of German disquiet on nuclear weaponry. The question of Eurostrategic missiles has brought a not quite slumbering giant to life. The weeklies *Der Spiegel* and *Der Stern* have

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initiated what is, in effect, a campaign against the West's nuclear strategy—and Germany's role in it, which they depict as sacrificial (not without reason). The churches, often on the initiative of laymen as well as pastors and priests, have created an entire network of discussion and lobbying groups on the question. Schmidt recently explained on American television that the fact that Germany has conscription makes these issues particularly difficult to contain. He did not belabor the obvious. Without a national consensus on foreign and defense policy, the Bundeswehr cannot function. That consensus has begun to fragment. A mere change of governments cannot restore it.

It is a reasonable prediction that the Eurostrategic missiles will never be installed in the Federal Republic. Should the present coalition government continue its support for them, it will face internal division within each of its components. Should the Free Democrats break away and join with the Christian parties before the election of 1984, that coalition too would face determined and substantial opposition on the missile question—opposition that would call into question the entire military alliance with the United States. It is always possible for an obdurate government of the right to attempt forceful measures against this sort of opposition. It is difficult to see how it could guarantee the effectiveness of the German forces (and the security of the American ones) in a society marked by continuous turbulence. We may be about to experience, in Japan, a remarkable phenomenon: the political nullification of our defense arrangements with the Japanese. Before risking that in Germany, even Reagan and Haig might decide that the new missiles are best based on submarines (as Schmidt suggested in the first place). The present coalition may indeed fall next year, but economic issues and its general exhaustion will be as important as the defense issue.

That much said, the entire question of Federal Germany's role in the alliance has now been raised in more acute form than at any time since the German debate on rearmament thirty years ago. The recent election in France means, in effect, a return to a Gaullist policy with respect to the superpowers. The election in the Netherlands, the possibility of a return to power by Labor in Britain in 1983, point in the same direction. One German option might be a revival of the old idea of the European defense community. The United States would dislike it, since it would emphasize European autonomy. The Soviet Union would dislike it because of that and the implied inclusion of the Federal Republic in a European nuclear force. The notion of European defense, however, is likely to gain ground in Germany no matter which coalition rules. There is, however, another possibility—much more remote.

In a last-minute attempt to avert German rearmament in 1952, Stalin proposed—in effect—the reunification of Germany in return for its military neutralization. The Soviet leadership is averse to risk-taking. Still, suppose that within the next decade it concludes that it must break out of its trap. A failing economy, staggering burdens of arms procurement, the spread of domestic dissent to the ethnic republics and the working class, Polish conditions everywhere in the empire, the growing repulsiveness of the Soviet model to the rest of the world, may combine to induce a new willingness to incur risks. We usually assume that the Soviet leadership might risk war. What if it risks a political campaign to undo the Atlantic alliance? The 1980s are not the 1950s, and the German Democratic Republic cannot be discarded like a disposable lighter. Still, a serious Soviet offer to the Federal Republic might have a serious hearing—from right as well as left.

Given the probable continuation of the present debate on German national security, the American assumption that the Federal Republic can be persuaded or pushed into permanent alignment with the United States is not realistic. I have said that a Soviet campaign to undo the Atlantic alliance is possible; to win it, the Soviet Union would have to be ready to undo the Warsaw Pact in its present form. Without a policy for next week, let alone the next decade, our present government prefers not to think about such eventualities. It is time that some of us did; there might well be profound gains for all of us in an alteration of Europe's postwar map. In other words, Germany's problems are not Germany's alone. □

Murder

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

those citizens who still value the constitutional rights of the accused. But this latest crackdown on criminals may, in the long run, nourish the cause of civil liberties by providing the occasion for a public airing of an issue too long neglected by the media—that is, the true nature of crime and violence in America.

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Our most dangerous criminals no longer fit the *modus operandi* of Jack the Ripper or the Boston Strangler, who could plead insanity as their excuse. On the contrary, it may be that our most dangerous offenders are our most respectable citizens and that they have a perfect alibi: military defense and balancing the budget.

On the sixth and final day of budget debate in the House of Representatives, Phil Gramm, Democrat from Texas, cosponsor of the Reagan-backed budget plan which, as finally approved by Congress, calls for more than $36 billion in cutbacks in social programs, declared, in response to the charge that supporters of the bill were not really mean-spirited enough to carry it out, "We are shooting real bullets." To which a liberal Democrat from New York, Representative Thomas Downey, retorted: "You're firing real bullets, and when you hit some of these programs, you're going to kill real people." Even the relatively restrained editorial department of *The Los Angeles Times* had been moved to comment the previous month: "The reformers in Washington are going about their work these days with a merciless intensity that sometimes makes the very act of governing look like a capital offense."

When we speak of crime and violence, we immediately think of shootings and stabbings—of Saturday Night Specials and the meat cleaver caked with blood—for it is the sudden, forceful and brutal infliction of painful physical injury that is the object of our deepest fears. If a liquor store clerk is shot to death in a robbery, we have no doubt that a violent crime has been committed. But when people are needlessly crippled or killed by their working and living conditions; when working men and women die of brown lung disease caused by exposure to cotton dust in textile mills; when innocent children are killed in automobile accidents from injuries that could have been prevented by automatic safety systems; when people could have been rescued from conditions of intolerable deprivation but are left to the "silent killers" of hunger, cold and sickness—their pain and loss is no less attributable to human action. Yet we shrink from recognizing this infliction of human suffering as a form of violence.

Defenders of government and industry will object to this characterization and argue that there is a profound difference between the deaths that result from the hazards of the workplace, for example, and the deaths that occur at the hands of common murderers. In the first place, it will be said, no government official or corporate executive *intends* the death of American workers. Whatever fatalities may result from exposure to cotton dust or asbestos fibers or radon gas are the unintended consequences of hazards that are simply too costly to be eliminated from the workplace. But this argument ignores what the law means by "malice aforethought," the cryptogram which the Penal Code uses to distinguish between liability for murder and liability for workers' compensation. As Professors Wayne LaFave and Austin Scott point out in their authoritative *Handbook on Criminal Law*: "*Intent* has traditionally been defined to include knowledge, and thus it is usually said that one *intends certain consequences [not only] when he desires that* his acts cause those consequences," but also when he "*knows* that those consequences are substantially certain to result from his acts." Thus, a SWAT-team marksman who fires a bullet from a high-powered rifle at a terrorist who is holding a hostage in front of him as a human shield has an *intent* in the eyes of the law to kill the hostage because even though he may not desire his death, he knows that there is a substantial certainty that the hostage will be killed if he fires the gun. The officer is therefore guilty of murder.

In addition to intent-to-kill murder, the law of homicide recognizes a type of murder known as "depraved-heart" murder. The archaic but fitting mental criterion in the common law for this category of murder was "a state of mind evincing a depraved heart, devoid of social duty, and fatally bent on mischief." The American Law Institute, in its Model Penal Code, uses the phrase "[acting] recklessly under circumstances manifesting extreme indifference to the value of human life," as when the defendant fires into a moving car or plays Russian roulette.

The corporate version of depraved-heart murder finds its paradigm in the production of the Ford Pinto. Documents obtained from the Ford Motor Company established that corporate executives knew there was a substantial risk that the failure to install a plastic baffle on the gas tank—which would have increased the cost of production of each vehicle by $11—would result in the deaths of as many as 180 people per year. Using cost-benefit analysis approved by Federal regulators, one Ford memorandum stated, in effect, that the cost of making the car safe exceeded the benefit to be gained by saving lives, and that it was therefore not cost-efficient to add the safety feature. Ford used dollar-value figures approved by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, which rounded out to $200,000 per life—less than some Ford executives make in a single year.

This cost-benefit memorandum and other documents that would have established Ford's criminal liability for reckless homicide were excluded by the trial judge in the only criminal prosecution against the company—a case arising out of the deaths of three Indiana teen-age girls who were burned when the 1973 Pinto they were driving exploded upon being rear-ended by a two-ton van. Conservative estimates put the number of burn deaths resulting from Pinto crashes since 1970 at 500, which is more than the total number of victims killed by convicted mass murderers in the same period.

The cost-benefit defense to profit-motivated murder is the supply-side version of the insanity defense. What it says is that the loss of human life is justified by cost-savings which in turn result in the greatest good for the greatest number. Savings resulting from economizing on safety are passed on to consumers in an amount of dollars that exceeds the total dollar value of lives lost. This is the classic prescription of

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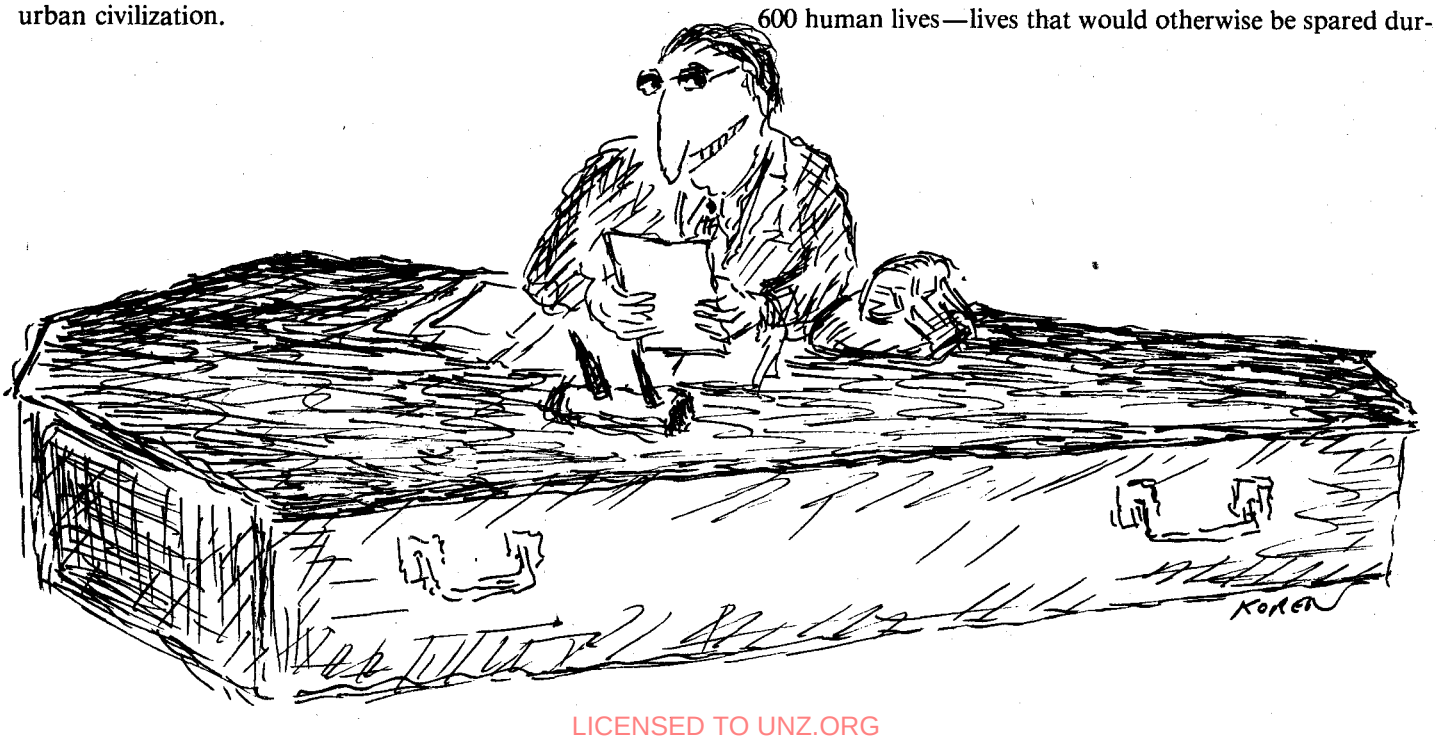
utilitarian philosophy, the cornerstone of Anglo-American legal and political thought. It is also the alibi of Raskolnikov. In Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, Raskolnikov seeks to justify his murder of the old pawnbroker Lizaveta by citing the good uses to which the old woman's money could be put. "Hundreds, perhaps thousands of lives could be put on the right path, dozens of families rescued from poverty, from ruin, from collapse, from decay, from the venereal wards of the hospitals—all this with her money!" Raskolnikov exclaims. "Kill her, take her money, dedicate it to serving mankind, to the general welfare. Well—what do you think—isn't this petty little crime effaced by thousands of good deeds? For one life, thousands of lives saved from ruin and collapse. One death and a hundred lives—there's arithmetic for you."

It is the voice of Raskolnikov that speaks in a supplemental memorandum filed this year with the U.S. Supreme Court by President Reagan's new director of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). The case involves the agency's power to set standards of exposure of textile workers to cotton dust, which causes brown lung, a respiratory disease that has permanently disabled at least 35,000 workers. In an extraordinary about-face, OSHA, which had successfully defended its cotton-dust standard before the U.S. Court of Appeals against an industry challenge in 1979, suddenly reversed its position shortly after the President appointed Thorne Auchter, a former Florida contractor, to head the agency. "While the agency in the past maintained that it would be inconsistent with the [Occupational Safety and Health] Act for OSHA to engage in cost-benefit analysis for the purpose of setting standards for exposure to toxic substances," the memorandum announced, "the agency has now concluded that it would be appropriate to re-examine its previous position." In short, brown lung and other chronic conditions like cancer, heart disease and sterility may simply be the price that workers have to pay for the benefits of living in modern industrial urban civilization.

As U.S. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall observed in a dissenting opinion last year in *Industrial Union* v. *American Petroleum Institute*, involving the exposure of petrochemical workers to benzene, "More Americans were killed in the workplace [in the four years preceding passage of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970] than in the contemporaneous Vietnam War." During that period, a total of 58,000 workers died as a result of accidents in the workplace, and as many as 400,000 are estimated to have died of occupational diseases caused by exposure to toxic chemicals and other harmful substances. "One of the primary purposes of the Act," Justice Marshall noted, "was to ensure regulation of these 'insidious silent killers.'" A recent study, based on a review of more than 5,000 workplaces, estimates that almost 40 percent of total cancer mortality over the next thirty years will be caused by exposure to asbestos and five other major industrial carcinogens.

What prevents these deaths from being legally classified as murder is the concept of time. Lawyers call it the Year-and-a-Day Rule. What it says is that if the defendant pollutes his victim's water supply or poisons his cattle feed or exposes his lungs to cotton dust or buries high-level radioactive waste in his community and the victim does not die within a year and a day after exposure, then no one can be held criminally liable for any deaths that result at some indeterminate time in the future. But the future is a legal fiction, while the deaths that result from poisoning the environment are real.

In another effort by the Reagan Administration to free badly needed capital to help restore the financial health of American industry, the Department of Transportation has proposed to delay, for at least another year, requirements that new cars have air bags or automatic seat belts as standard equipment. This concession to the auto industry is being made notwithstanding the department's own estimate that the postponement would result in the loss of an additional 600 human lives—lives that would otherwise be spared dur-



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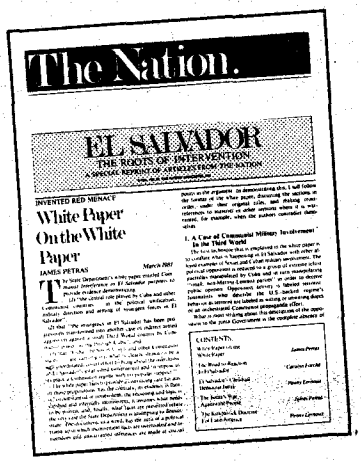

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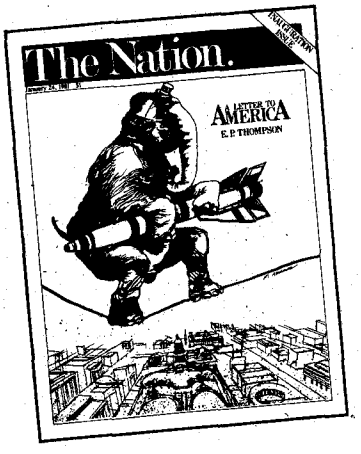

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ing the active service lifetimes of 1982 cars. If you asked your average citizen if she and her children would like to be burned at the stake this weekend to appease the National God of Inflation, she would think you were crazy. But no one seems to think there is any reason to question the sanity of the decision to sacrifice the lives of 600 human beings on U.S. highways as the price we pay for keeping down the cost of transportation.

What prevents us from seeing the murderousness of our most respected economic and political institutions is a legal scam—not the ordinary larceny of your average flimflam man but more like one of those truly artful acts of the mind, like an Indian rope trick or, to adapt Justice Rehnquist's trenchant metaphor from another context, "a *tour de force* reminiscent not of jurists such as Hale, Holmes and Hughes, but of escape artists such as Houdini." It is this extraordinary power to keep the public mind from associating images of violence with the day-to-day operations of government and corporate business that has made lawyers and lawmakers a veritable mafia of the metaphor. It would be a gross exaggeration to say that there is no functional difference between the political process, corporate capitalism and organized crime but there are sufficient similarities to suggest that the most dangerous perpetrators of capital crimes today are not necessarily the present inmates of death row. Under capital punishment statutes like the one currently in force in California, a jury is authorized to impose the death penalty if "the murder was intentional and carried out for financial gain."

The one great issue that has agitated the human spirit beyond all others down through the ages has been the mystery of unjust suffering. When Job accused the Lord of injustice, no answer came from the Chief Executive of the Universe. Instead, there appeared three old friends, men of considerable position and reputation, who came to assure Job that no matter how unjust things may look now, there is a higher justice. But contrary to popular understanding, it is not the argument of the three friends that is vindicated; it is the heresy of Job. In a penultimate passage the Lord says to one of the three, Eliphaz the Temanite: "My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of Me the thing that is right as My servant, Job, hath."

The lesson of this biblical parable of justice is that the suffering of the poor and the powerless is not some inevitable result of forces beyond human control. While it is true that there are certain natural disasters that cannot be prevented, such as volcanic eruptions and earthquakes, even these threats to human life can be controlled insofar as their occurrence is capable of being predicted with some degree of accuracy and the amount of death and suffering reduced by collective action. But much of the harm that is commonly thought to be part of the natural hazards of life, particularly the harm inflicted by poverty, and the chemical fallout of modern industry, is not at all natural: it is preventable. Not only is human suffering preventable but the failure to prevent it can fairly be characterized as the most insidious form of man's violence to man. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Surrounded by Indifference

PETER MARIN

EVERYTHING WE HAD: An Oral History of the Vietnam War by Thirty-Three American Soldiers Who Fought It. *By Al Santoli. Random House. 265 pp. $12.95.*

NAM: The Vietnam War in the Words of the Men and Women Who Fought There. *By Mark Baker. William Morrow & Company. 324 pp. $12.95.*

Both of these books are collections of firsthand accounts of the war in Vietnam. They are important because they mark a new phase in the struggle waged by some of our veterans to come to terms with their experiences and give them voice in a way of use to us all. That process, ignored by almost all Americans save the vets themselves, seems to me at the moment the most compelling development occurring in our nation's moral life, and here and there in these books one can see it beginning to produce something of immense value.

Last year, working on a long essay about Vietnam and guilt, I talked with many veterans. I found repeatedly that a few moments of honest conversation with any one of them put to shame the versions of the war produced by our film makers, novelists and many journalists. Later, when the essay was published, I was astonished by the response to it: first, by the depth of the rage still aroused by any criticism of the war; second, by the picture many still have of the conflict. Despite all that has been written about Vietnam, it remains in our popular imagination an explosion much like the Korean War or the Pacific theater of World War II. Surprisingly few Americans realize as yet the particular brutality of Vietnam and the extent of the arbitrary violence and programmed barbarity that marked it.

That blindness (and the moral emptiness it reflects) makes it critical that the vets speak openly, as they do in these two books. The war and its lessons are now almost entirely in their hands. Their own sanity and a large part of America's moral life depend upon the extent to which they think and speak about the war. This is no easy task, for the vets are surrounded by indifference and evasiveness—both on the right and the left. Yet these books present us with a powerful collective testimony that at least begins to call into question the easy, cant-ridden opinions many of us hold about the war in Vietnam.

The tone of *Everything We Had* is measured and constrained—"cool," one might say. Its real virtue is its structure. The accounts of the war are artfully arranged in chronological sequence; the personal, detailed stories take us from the blithe and carefree beginnings of our involvement to the final horrors of its end. But there is something oddly flat about the book, a kind of emptiness at its center. The voice is so matter-of-fact, so rational, so apparently lacking in reflective intelligence or emotion that one begins to ache for hints of a deeper sensibility. It is precisely the absence of these qualities—the capacity for suffering, the response *to* suffering—that one discovers so often face to face with the vets.

Mark Baker's *Nam* gives us an entirely different picture of the war. His tone is more emotional and anguished—what one might call "hot." Time after time I found myself turning down the corners of pages to which I wanted to return. Many of the accounts deepen into a felt sense of confusion, anger or guilt, and a few move beyond that into the beginnings of a moral response. A budding consciousness asserts itself in the speakers: a troubled sense of something owed, something to be changed or set right, the continued existence of the past as an ethical burden or a question to be answered with one's future life. Here, for instance, is a veteran quoted in *Nam*:

> I get into this survivor head sometimes, and I'll say to people, "But you don't understand. You don't understand what you're doing to other people when you fuck up like that. You don't understand that this stupidity of yours, this self-conscious and deliberate stupidity, this distortion of the truth, this deliberate dishonesty of yours, hurts. I'm not even going to bother to talk to you about how it hurts you. I know you're not ready for that. But let me count the ways that you are hurting somebody else. Let me try to make you understand that when you behave that way you jeopardize other people's lives, Asshole. I don't care if we both have M-16s in our hands and it's on the front, or if we both have checkbooks in our hands and it's back home. It's the same God damn thing."

There is, however, one near-fatal flaw in *Nam* which threatens to undercut the book's impact. Baker has organized his work around several interviews that are presented discontinuously, in sections: first a part of one story, then parts of others, then a second part of the first story, etc. But we are never told, in the process, the names or backgrounds of those whose voices we hear; nor are we told how many speakers there are, the number from which they were selected, or *how* they were selected. This matters; it matters a great deal. As things stand the reader cannot tell if or how much Baker has doctored these tales, what he has censored and why, or how and to what particular ends he has shaped them. One is nagged perpetually by the possibility that the stories have been fictionalized, or at least slanted.

We hear, for instance, of various officers ordering men to commit atrocities in situations or places not yet publicly acknowledged by the government or named by the press. If such stories are true, one wants some sort of detail or coordinates: *which* place or date, *which* military unit, *which* commanders. All of that matters, too, if only because the war itself tends, always, to become so much a part of our abstractions, ideologies and myths that it is necessary for moral, political as well as legal reasons to get such matters as straight as possible and to make an accurate record of them.

Yet, for all of that, Baker's work, and to a lesser extent Santoli's, are powerful enough to establish the same thing that one realizes in talking to veterans: in their anguish and reflection they have been forced to enter a realm from which the rest of us hang back. They face as immediate problems the classic issues of individual and moral culpability, guilt and expiation, fallibility and forgiveness, and the contrary

Peter Marin is currently at work on a book, Conscience and the Common Good.

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pulls of loyalty and resistance, independence of conscience and respect for authority. These issues, raised by the left during the war, have now been put almost entirely aside—even by most of those who raised them.

The challenge these texts offer to the left is clear. The vets' depth of experience and seriousness far surpass in power and significance the ideological shrillness and niggardliness of spirit that so often mark the politics and rhetoric of the left. You hear that seriousness in private more than in public, and much more often face-to-face than in any published text; out of the vets' terrible knowledge a wisdom equal to that knowledge has begun to emerge: a word here, a suggestion there, a sense of intensity that is as yet inchoate but that may, in the future, be given full expression. It is up to all of us to meet these men and women at least halfway, to initiate a dialogue that will truly articulate the tragedy of Vietnam. How those who resisted the war can help those who fought and still suffer from it is a question the left has yet to answer. □

'Feed Me! Feed Me!'

MICHAEL MALONE

FAT WOMAN. *By Leon Rooke. Alfred A. Knopf. 179 pp. $9.95.*

When Faulkner had the illiterate Dewey Dell in *As I Lay Dying* say to herself, "I feel like a wet seed wild in the hot blind earth," he gave her a language of the heart. Leon Rooke, a North Carolinian short-story writer of middle years, has given the same generous gift of speech to the heroine of his first novel, *Fat Woman*, a fiction of flawless tone and rare good grace. Like other of Gordon Lish's authors at Knopf—Barry Hannah, Raymond Carver—Rooke is master of a fine ear and a lean line. In nuance of setting he is as precise as a neorealist painting of a Ford pickup truck in front of a 7-Eleven. In his heart he is as devastating, as touched with the spirit and, finally, as forgiving, as Flannery O'Connor.

Fat Woman is a "Southern novel" about an ordinary day in the life of a good country couple, the mammoth, sweet-hearted Ella Mae Hopkins and her rail-thin, live-wire husband, Edward. It is Southern the way Eudora Welty is Southern. Our literature has always been rooted in region, and not nation—which may mean we will never get our Great American Novel, in the way *War and Peace* is the great Russian novel. That region called "The South" is one of the great glories of our literary landscape, Rome to New England's Athens. Its capital is usually located along the Mississippi-Georgia line of Faulkner, Wright, Caldwell, McCullers, O'Connor, Welty, Capote. But there's always been an illustrious group of mid-Atlantic kin, and it is to this Carolina/Tennessee/Kentucky branch (the family of Wolfe, Warren, Glasgow, Agee, Gordon, Tate, Styron) that Rooke belongs. That he reads as much like Welty as Warren indicates to what degree our literary heritage of the Southern landscape and Southern experience is a fictional construct of whole cloth, whose road map is—and has always been since Twain and Poe—other Southern fictions.

Ella Mae Hopkins, with her fat-squeezed heart and daydreamy soul, her huge bulk and heaving tears and skin "too white and too soft and too easily bruised," has the metabolism of Eula Varner and the sensibility of Christina Rossetti inside the body of a fat woman. "She carried it, the weight, but it was not her. She could be slender as a thread. . . . The runoff from even the smallest rain could carry her along." Without ever denying the character who flings banana-split plastic containers out the car window because nice folks don't get chocolate on their clothes, who idolizes a radio commentator and agrees that "corporate tax relief is just the thing to put the little people back on their feet," without ever falsifying "the long, boring impoverished wastefulness" of her experience, Rooke has given Ella Mae a mind Proustian in its synesthetic swoops in and out of a palpable past.

Within her trailer and kudzu borders she lives as a poet, immersed in the richness of even the thinnest moment. The sag of black utility lines low on their poles plummets her into her dirt-poor childhood when schoolmates called her "Blimpo" and she was always first out at dodgeball, when a thug of a father tortured her with sadistic commands, to hold her hand in ice water, to lick his shoe. Throughout the day we spend with her, Ella Mae's mind roams back to visit her mother, who located in tasks like churning butter and plaiting hair an order and harmony that Ella Mae herself cannot sustain against the dark.

Because she is herself so large-souled, so quick to see good, her "sweet prince" Edward says she's "so innocent you think skunk don't stink nor Tom Cat prowl." But she is far from an ingénue in Eden and has in fact plunged down into the depths with Nietzschean recklessness. In a vision of all she's consumed "stirring, rising out of foul stench and sludge," she's seen the giant Monster "stunning in its ugliness," seen in fallen human need "a vast black hole, darkness without end commanding *Feed me! Feed me!*"

Her homeland is the American Protestantism that reads in the world angry letters from God. He turns His back leaving the sky "cold and remote and so chillingly placid that all of it went inside you and made you want to cry or beat your head aginst the wall out of plain hopelessness." God's eye is ever on Ella Mae: *He* knows where the sixty oatmeal cookies went even if she can't figure it out sitting down with a pencil. She hears His disgust: "You've been out feeding your face. . . . You're a pig, Ella Mae." God has watched her polish off a tub of Dairy Queen ice cream and cried, "*Gluttony thy name is Ella Mae!*"

She knows her other sins as well. Envy: Of the Weightlosers Anonymous triumph, Bette Wiffle, who went from size 42 to size 16 "and was now having the time of her life in Antigonish, Nova Scotia." Wrath: At her bony, shiftless neighbor Eula Joyner whose cattiness ("How come you're not eating? . . . Are you sick?") starts "hatred and meanness foaming inside her" until she wants to race across the street and hurl herself against Eula's trailer and flatten it. Sloth: Sneaking naps while other women are out organizing bookmobiles and saving stray animals. And worst, despair: Thinking life "was just nothing at all. It had no more point to it than

COMING: Richard Lingeman's review of the original *Sister Carrie.*

Michael Malone is the author of Dingley Falls, *a novel just published in paperback by Pocket Books.*

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snakes in a basket." Thinking so when she had the blessings of a husband "sweet as a kitten" and two fine boys, thinking so until even Jesus might "take a switch to her."

For between her and a vexed God, who might be exasperated enough to "reach down and choke her with His very own hands," Ella Mae has a friend in Jesus, a Jesus who values her virtues—and she has many, among them the great comic virtues of laughter's grace and love's redemption. To the Jesus with whom she played hide-and-seek as a child, she must now say "I am not ready. I thought I told you that!" Not ready, because she cannot bear to part from earth as long as her loving Edward scoots and vaults around on it. Edward's startling plan to save Ella Mae from the dangers of her overeating is an act of true (and in the modern novel, rare) marriage, and *Fat Woman* is a true (and in the modern novel, rare) comedy. It does not detour tragedy; it travels through it, and goes beyond. It accepts: as Jesus accepts Ella Mae's eating. After all, "the last thing Jesus wanted on this earth was a good supper," and the first thing He said to His disciples when he returned from the dead was, "Have ye here any meat?" □

Scapegoat and Scapegrace

TODD GITLIN

MEDIA POWER POLITICS. *By David L. Paletz and Robert M. Entman. The Free Press. 308 pp. $16.95.*

While many people suspect that the press is powerful, it is not so easy to count the ways. For its part, the press tells advertisers it makes people pay attention, yet to its critics it cries, Scapegoat! And there has been plenty of scholarly and journalistic criticism in recent years for the press to cry about. Debate roils over the cut of media bias and the direction of the effects: does the press legitimize the political-economic system or undermine it? Critics on the left read the papers, look at TV and see in style and substance daily confirmation of the established order of power and privilege. Critics on the right tend to see liberal assaults on free enterprise and even on national security.

Since the framing of news is usually unintended and often subtle, and since the effects are complex, it has been easy for shallow, threatened journalists to mock the entire scholarly enterprise. After all, if the frames of American journalism are by no means as straightout simple as those of *Pravda*, how can it be said that journalism helps protect the powers that be? Did Woodstein write for naught?

Todd Gitlin is the author of The Whole World Is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left *(University of California Press) and is working on a book about the politics of TV entertainment.*

David Paletz and Robert Entman, who teach political science at Duke University, have written the first book to gather the threads from many recent studies. They seek to comprehend where the press fits into the political-economic system as a whole. They make a powerful and sophisticated case that the news media both "disrupt and defend the status quo." They know that American journalism, like politics, proceeds through everyday assumptions more than through conspiracies. Thus, they make sense of the seemingly unassimilable facts that the press exposes highly placed malefactors and still anoints official authority, attacks many business practices and still supports corporate capitalism, claims independence and still tends to toe a national line on foreign policy issues. Readers who wish to understand why American journalism in El Salvador seems to have learned next to nothing from its experience in Vietnam will be instructed by this book.

Unfortunately, Paletz and Entman have let clumsy and ponderous writing overwhelm any fluidity of prose and occasional good line. ("Presidents complaining about the press are like ships' captains objecting to the sea.") Like much academic writing, theirs gives too many announcements of coming attractions, too many lists, too many summaries, too many concluding paragraphs. Like too many critiques of mindless empiricism, arguments are frequently too general, though there are some compelling case studies: of Watergate, of reports on a North Carolina city council and, illustrating press dependence on the State Department line on foreign embroilments, coverage of the Shaba Province invasion of 1978.

For all the didacticism, there are many particulars and arguments here to reward any student of American politics. Paletz and Entman argue, for example, that by inflating the importance of the Iowa caucuses in the 1976 primary season, the press made Jimmy Carter "the man to beat." Then that same press helped bring down Edward Kennedy, and then the same Jimmy Carter, in 1980. Pack journalism is not incompatible with rapid shifts of frame; in fact, it may accelerate them. A post-inauguration Presidential honeymoon period sometimes segues into reports of the President's failures. In the same way, the press contributes to public despair about Congress—indeed, about public participation in politics of any kind—while helping insure that the reprobates will be re-elected.

Though less persuasive in chapters on the Supreme Court and on the police, the book rebounds with a solid job on the coverage of political groups (known, in an antipolitical culture, as "interest groups"). "In the main, media coverage of the nation's contending factions defends the powerful and defangs the threatening." "The press thrives on people robbing banks, not banks robbing people." In a useful content analysis of *New York Times* coverage of Common Cause, the authors demonstrate how that organization parlayed elite leadership, establishment values and savvy about how reporters work into overwhelmingly favorable coverage.

One chapter stands out. In "Domesticated Opinion: The Conservative Myth," Paletz and Entman show that

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public opinion has been nowhere near as antiliberal as press reports and Republican propaganda would have it. Their careful examination of polls during the 1970s indicates that majorities, often *growing* majorities, have favored social liberalization and economic liberalism. Even most of the growth in support of military spending took place in 1979 and 1980, *after* reports about the growing conservative mood had become the common coin of the press. Public distrust of officials was interpreted by most of the press as a rejection of government activism across the board.

At the root of this new conventional wisdom, the authors argue, was the rightward shift of top Republicans and of the Cambridge-New York-Washington axis's semi-official thinkers, who among them do much to frame issues for the press. "Real public opinion," they caution, "is perennially diffuse, contradictory, unsettled. It should not be summarized with an ideological label." At a time when many serious journalists, network executives and even activists on the left are concluding that the 1980 election is the mandate for a new consensus, every open-minded journalist in America should read this chapter.

The book is not without several intellectual shortfalls. Journalism is undeniably limited by the tolerances and tastes of its politicized readers. The authors correctly argue that bad coverage "originates in the values shared by reporters and audiences." This is an important insight, but one that unfortunately does not always inform the book's chapters. The authors also exaggerate the press's autonomy, a frequent failure of media criticism. And, at times, there is an opposite problem: Paletz and Entman are not always clear about why and how the political elites shift their opinions, dragging the establishment press in their wake. Finally, their chapter on the ideology of television entertainment is too schematic; they have tried to cram too much into brief compass.

But in general they are judicious. They do not claim that the press brainwashes the helpless masses, or that it is the malevolent creature of a demonic ruling class. *Media Power Politics* signals the coming of age of a new generation of scholarship. The burden of proof now has shifted to those who insist that the press simply and independently calls 'em as it sees 'em; or that the explanation for its shortcomings is merely technical (not enough time, not enough space); or that the form and skew of press coverage don't have much effect on public opinion. Journalists should take this book seriously, but if David Paletz and Robert Entman are right, they probably won't. □

'Cut Right Down the Middle'

VIVIAN GORNICK

SWEETSIR. *By Helen Yglesias. Simon & Schuster. 332 pp. $13.95.*

Some years ago, during a violent domestic quarrel, a Vermont woman accidentally killed her husband. She was subsequently put on trial for murder in the town where she and her husband had been raised. She was acquitted by a "jury of her peers." Presumably, the elemental outline of these events not only moved Helen Yglesias but she saw in it as well a significance beyond its own mean self, a living metaphor that provides the possibility of making literature out of journalism. She sat down to write this novel.

Sally Stark—blonde, long-legged, lovely, a small-town New England local—loses her virginity at 15 to Vin Ciomei, a quarry worker twice her age; submission seems the only way to get on with her life. Sally becomes pregnant, she and Vin are married, and at 16 she's a mother. At 26, having drifted through ten unformative years, she leaves Vin, becomes a legal secretary and sets herself up in an apartment in town with her young daughter. She is now bright and restless, open to the life within her. She meets Morgan Sweetsir, a wild, handsome construction worker. Between them there is immediate sexual power. They become lovers and then fall in love, held together by the sweet river of talk each one releases in the other. It is as though both have been living in solitary confinement until their meeting.

But the closeness between them is not enough, not nearly enough, to swamp the damaged beings they each lug around inside. Morgan (Sweets) drinks, and Sally keeps him company. Sweets likes to play "sex games" on occasion (preferably with Sally tied spread-eagle to a chair), and Sally doesn't really mind ("ah, it's all kid stuff, he doesn't really mean it"). Sweets hits her in the face once when he's drunk and Sally ignores the warning signal that goes off in her head ("it didn't mean anything, he was drunk"). We remember that Sweets has had three wives and a reputation for depression and violent treatment of women. But Sally says, "Listen, those other women have nothing to do with me. It was never between them and Sweets like it is between us. Sweets and me? There's never been anything like it."

They marry and, fairly quickly, their awful destiny is accomplished. Sweets continues drinking, spends too much money, curls up two, three mornings a week in a fetal depression that ends in a hitting rage. Sally works, nags, screams at the kids (his and hers), alternates between fear and fury and dies a thousand deaths over their disintegrating love. She'd been so certain their feelings would prevail! And, indeed, their feelings are remarkably long-lasting; they return again and again, possibly in order to keep the connection going long enough to bring on disaster. During an endless daylong fight, Sweets slams the side of Sally's head; she pulls a knife from a kitchen drawer, thrusts it at his attacking arm and, in a freak accident, the knife enters his body and pierces his heart. Sally watches Sweets die as her heart congeals with dread.

On the afternoon of the day she kills him, after they've been fighting since early morning, and as she's about to go off to a doctor she thinks may tell her she has cancer, Sally tries to reach Sweets as he stands drinking on the porch with the neighbors:

> She called out to Sweets to please come over. She didn't clearly know what she had in mind. He approached her very slowly and stood off some distance so she had to speak up. He had a lollipop sticking out of his mouth. . . .
>
> She said: "Please kiss me, Sweets." She tried to keep her voice low enough for intimacy but she had to speak up to be heard. "I hate to leave for the doctor when we're in this kinda mood. It's like I'm bringin bad luck along."

Vivian Gornick is the author of The Romance of American Communism *(Basic Books) and is working on a book about women scientists.*

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His face softened. Brightness glowed in his eyes as if tears were forming. He took the damn lolly out of his cheek, grunting, half-complaining, but some part of him was clearly pleased by her plea. He put his head down and leaning in kissed her on the lips. She clung to his mouth. Touch would melt away the meanness between them. His lips quivered with the familiar ambiguity she recognized from their first meeting in the Hilltop parking lot. He had always been cut right down the middle—his need to cling on one side and his need to flee, to get loose on the other.

Here, in this passage, is the book: Sally's initial understanding (from the first she has known everything); Sweets's fearful damage (and always the stupid, forlorn hope that this time it would be different); their mutual inability not to live the thing out; the murderous despair that follows on the predictable failure of the psyche divided against itself. It was this emotional configuration that Yglesias had the writer's wit to see in the newspaper accounts of Sweets's death and Sally's trial. This is the psychological core of the novel, the insight that should infuse the prose, deepen the sentences, achieve the dimension that transmutes journalism into literature. Oddly, it never happens.

Helen Yglesias is a talented writer. Her prose is alive and buoyant; her language both yields and demands, forming by its deceptive ease a shape that holds the reader's inner eye. Yet *Sweetsir* is not compelling; it seems uprooted and lacking in context. It feels as though it is floating in literary space. Panels of prose are simply laid out side by side—The Early Life of Sally Stark, The Life of Sally and Sweets, The Death of Sweets, The Trial of Sally Sweetsir—each panel given equal weight as though, equally and together, the curiously stitched sections will tell the story—and indeed, they *do* tell a story, but not *the* story.

The metaphoric subject of this book is the psychic history of two human beings who come together, thrash wildly about in an attempt to reduce their mutual isolation, fail miserably and are punished brutally for their failure. That history—the benumbed inner life of these two—is the novel's story, the one that should have been mined richly and repetitively, stubbornly, obsessively. We should feel, with a power that accumulates across 300 pages, the rhythm

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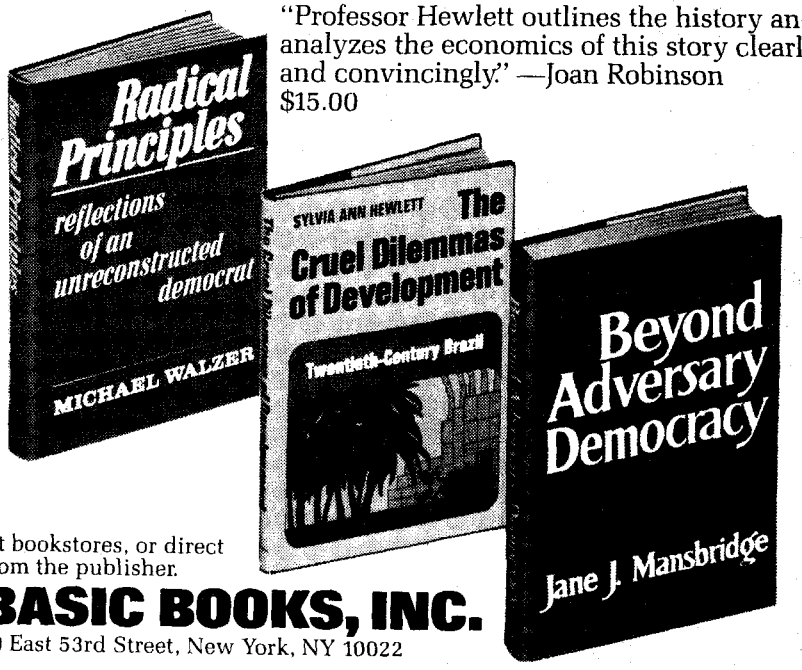

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of doomed inarticulateness into which both Sweets and Sally are locked. Sweets's death, when it comes, should be laden with the fearfulness of the inevitable. It is that fearfulness—achieved not through the recital of event but the creation of texture—that is unaccountably missing from *Sweetsir*. Yglesias's intelligence provides sophisticated insights that come in bits and pieces—here an interesting paragraph, there a sentence to stop the breath—but they remain separate and unworked, without the vivid fullness, larger than the sum of its parts, that would transform Sally and Sweets, make of them memorable figures moving unavoidably toward their psychologically appointed ends.

What makes a work journalistic is the sense that the writer's interest is drawn from the outside, not pulled up out of the obsessing interior; the reader's conviction that something interesting came along and the writer decided to make something of it, not that he or she was compelled by the sudden visionary flash, possessed by that urgency that originates in deep feeling and makes you know the writer couldn't rest until this book came into existence. This is what Keats said gave art its meaning, what Faulkner meant when he said you must be burning to say it, otherwise it isn't any good. Helen Yglesias is so good a writer, her story is so right and her book so threaded with perceptions that might have been woven into a satisfying density. Yet, somehow, she could not or would not go that last mile, do the work necessary to concentrate the focus, intensify the understanding, live inside those characters long enough, fully enough, to make something powerful out of their situation. □

THEATER.

RICHARD GILMAN

Tourists and Refugees No. 2
The Little Foxes

Since 1977, Joseph Chaikin has led a collaborative theater effort at La MaMa called the Winter Project. Actors, directors, designers and musicians work for about three months a year on materials of their own devising, occasionally incorporating lines contributed by well-known writers. *Tourists and Refugees No. 2* is the third offering of the enterprise. I missed its predecessor, *Tourists and Refugees*, but saw *Re-Arrangements* in 1979, and *No. 2* seems a big advance over that. Some of Chaikin's weaknesses, or those of the people he attracts, are to be found in the new piece, but these are easily outweighed by its strengths. I doubt whether we'll see any more original and satisfying theater for a good while.

As the title suggests, the piece is divided into two parts, though these aren't clearly separated. To the accompaniment of jagged, inventive music by a small ensemble, six actors, most of them veterans of Chaikin's Open Theater, slip in and out of a variety of roles, none of them named (the program lists them as "the woman with gray hair," "the man with black hair," etc.), and none of them constituting "characters" in a conventional narrative. What they offer are skitlike episodes, turns, epiphanies, self-contained soliloquies or fragments of speech. All of this is designed to exhibit certain fundamental or noncontingent realities in opposition to the way social or political forces have organized reality.

In its sounds and images the work deals with the *nature* of being a tourist or a refugee, two polar categories of being away from one's home. Without at all doing it neatly, the two actions or conditions fall into a tragicomic relationship, and it was the comic, or tourist, aspect I found most impressive. This is in line with my sense of Chaikin's previous work, including *Re-Arrangements*; to be serious for him is often to be political, which means to be grim and at the same time sentimental—a not uncommon conjunction. In the present piece the refugees are too often, and too easily, seen as victims of "fruit companies" and "multinationals," as well as of that action of capitalism that "creates needs, tastes, longings." Visually there are too many heads shrouded with cloths—for an image of facelessness, I suppose.

But even in these segments there are some affecting things, including one scene in which people driven from their homelands are "interviewed" for radio or TV. They speak no words, making only strange, agonized sounds, while the interviewer "translates" as though they are offering real sentences: "live another day . . . to spite the enemy . . . to tell a story."

In the "tourist" sections, the wit and invention flower. Among many things I could mention is a running number in which a group of tourists (visually the most touristy travelers imaginable) are led by a tour guide in slow motion across the stage, the world's stage, as it comes to seem. The guide intones a litany of questions—"Have you seen any natives since you arrived?" "Are there any natives where you come from?"—and later, on seeing a figure dancing or writhing on a platform, the tourists call out: "Are you a waterfall? A native? An angel? What's the life like?"

Another splendid bit is a long, lunatic monologue by Ray Barry (it's unfair, I know, to single him out by name; the other five actors are every bit as good), who—in drag and with a wig falling over his face—extols the virtues of "getting away," "getting some sun," seeing the world, visiting the graves of the famous—"Stalin, Mao, Hegel . . . walk right on the bones." Still another triumph is a scene in which a tourist is asked about his sexual fantasies by a native and launches into a horrendous nonstop account that would put de Sade to shame. All of which makes me want to give the group some unsolicited advice: go with the humor, which is really much more destructive in breaking up the logjam of perception afflicting us all.

A few weeks ago I promised to report on Elizabeth Taylor's stage debut; I hereby make good my vow.

Edmund Wilson once remarked that after flipping through an issue of *Life* magazine, any issue, he felt as though the culture depicted in its pages was entirely unreal, as though he were being shown a civilization he simply couldn't recognize. After seeing Taylor in *The Little Foxes*, after reading the reviews, almost all of them laudatory and some of them ecstatic, and after learning that she was nominated for a Tony award as Best Actress, I feel the same as Wilson; the culture out of which this incredible event could arise is as alien to me as that of Zimbabwe; more alien, for I imagine I share some general values with the people there.

Having already described the acclaim for Lauren Bacall as a case of the empress's new clothes, what am I to say about Taylor, in whom the discrepancy is greater still between what she is and what she is taken to be? One suspects she is a bad actress from the moment

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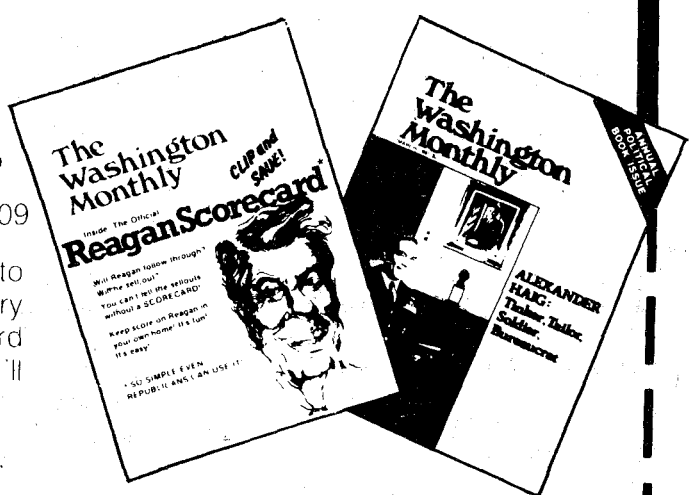

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she comes on stage, heavy, panoplied, like a clipper ship under full sail, except that this is dry land. But only when she begins to speak, in the role of the avaricious matron in Lillian Hellman's exhausted melodrama, can you determine just how bad she is.

Not even competence, not even bare adequacy. Her voice is gratingly high-pitched and her utterance is on one monotonous note, except for an interrogatory swoop at the end of nearly every line. She screeches or shrieks at moments when the script lets her know that "emotion" is required; she has the uncanny knack of emphasizing the wrong word or phrase in almost every bit of dialogue; each time she turns to a fellow actor, prepared to emote, the operation seems to take fifteen minutes. She has no sense of timing, no sense of verbal rhythm. When she says, "I wish you were dead," the resonances are those of the 1890s, and the snarl on her face is from the same period. The only thespian virtue I could detect in her is that she doesn't forget her lines.

How, then, account for the huzzahs? Either I'm wrong, along with the handful of friends and acquaintances with whom I gathered in traumatized silence during the intermissions, or all the others are: the flatterers, the blind people, the corrupted, the venal. At my most charitable I put down at least part of the éclat as being due to the nearly absolute inability of American audiences and most reviewers to tell good acting from bad. This is what gave Helen Hayes and Katharine Cornell their eminence, and this, compounded by the florid circumstances of Taylor's debut and the charisma manufactured elsewhere, is what makes for her standing ovations.

But there's also a conspiracy, conscious or not, to turn everything to account. I think of "Engine Charlie" Wilson's notorious remark about what's good for General Motors being good for America; substitute "Elizabeth Taylor" and "Broadway" in that sentence and you have what's happened. That and sycophancy too. When Taylor came on stage, the audience rose in an ovation, a thing that sometimes happens when "stars" make their appearance. But then, from somewhere behind me I heard someone shouting "Bravo!" Before she'd said a word, done a thing! An *a priori* bravo! Nothing could better have exhibited the demented, noxious quality of the event or testified more truly to the collapse of all our theatrical standards. □

MUSIC.

DAVID HAMILTON

Books by musical performers, and those based on their teaching, can illuminate both the general subject of musical performance and the specific performances of the author himself. Too often, however, such books satisfy only the second interest, offering collections of obiter dicta. For example, David Blum's *Casals and the Art of Interpretation* memorializes a great musician's primarily emotive perceptions about specific passages, without relating them to any larger conception of the particular work's unique properties. Many celebrity "master classes" are similarly flawed: minutiae are picked at and arbitrarily adjudicated; if the decisions are based on any wider concern, it is usually some broad axiom of "style" rather than the function of the detail at hand in the progress and structure of the piece.

By contrast, Erich Leinsdorf's new book, *The Composer's Advocate: A Radical Orthodoxy for Musicians* (Yale University Press, 216 pp., $14.95), addresses itself to a more general theory of interpretation. Leinsdorf does this with numerous examples from the literature and from his experience as performer, listener and teacher. Under the headings of "Knowing the Score," "Knowing the Composer," "Knowing What Composers Wanted," "Knowing Musical Tradition" and "Knowing the Right Tempo," he offers what is essentially a literalist approach to interpretation, such as has dominated much of Western (and especially American) music-making for the last half-century. To the familiar admonition, "Just play what is written!," he has added the sophistication of knowing that what is printed is not always what the composer wrote, that what he wrote was not necessarily what he expected to be played.

Early in his career Leinsdorf was a musical assistant to Arturo Toscanini and he has always had a fussy eye for detail, so it's not surprising to find him taking the literalist position. The workings of his mind are well-illustrated by a chapter on determining the tempos for the various numbers of Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*—a process resembling the solution of a crossword puzzle, involving the invocation of other works by Mozart as well as more expected appeals to internal consistency. Much of what Leinsdorf says here is sound—although I do seriously question his implicit assumption that the "proper" tempo of a musical idea is a fixed attribute, in whatever different contexts a composer may use it.

In fact, Leinsdorf takes it for granted that in all music (at least in the German-Austrian tradition from which the bulk of his examples are chosen) such attributes as correct tempo, dynamics, articulation and the like are inherent, that even if the composer neglected to enter them in his score (or wrote them carelessly or unclearly) they can be deduced from internal or external evidence. But this is to ignore the changing function of these attributes over the course of musical history.

For example, prior to the middle of the nineteenth century, most pieces (or distinct movements thereof) were in a single meter and tempo; any changes (as after slow introductions, or in variation sequences) were cleanly and clearly made. Then tempo transitions became a resource of the language, in Liszt's many-movements-in-one pieces and in Wagner's operas. In the present century, rapidly changing meters have often been used. Each of these situations implies a different relationship between steady tempo and musical coherence. A certain freedom of pulse in a Mozart slow movement will not likely obscure the meter but it might well undermine Wagner's changing tempos and will surely make incoherent the "Sacrificial Dance" in Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*.

Implicit in such an observation is the possibility of an approach to performance that is neither prescriptive nor deductive but analytical, speculative, exploratory. This is not Leinsdorf's position. He variously identifies the "ideal" (in the Platonic sense), the "correct" performance, with "the composer's intentions" (philosophically and historically a difficult concept) and with the work's first performance. But of course these two are not necessarily identical, to judge from a number of first performances I have attended—a few of them conducted by Leinsdorf, who must have been as aware of the discrepancy as I. If he really applied such archeological standards, he would of course have long since abandoned

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conducting the eighteenth-century literature with modern symphony orchestras. Like most other performances, his are an amalgam of historical awareness, modern circumstances and usage, his own predilections and his understanding of (and sympathy for) the particular piece.

Which brings me back to that earlier point about a work's unique properties. So much of Leinsdorf's interpretive strategy is external, derived from comparisons with other pieces, from documentary evidence, from "tradition," that it is not surprising to find his performances often sounding like generalizations. In my experience, the performer who begins from the other direction, determining the uniqueness of a piece on the structural and expressive levels, may risk going wrong, but his performances will be much more likely to stimulate, illuminate, involve.

In fact, there isn't much in this book about analysis of specific works; although Leinsdorf has read (and praises while disagreeing with) Joseph Kerman's book on the Beethoven quartets, he seems remarkably unaware of modern analytical theory and its possible relation to performance. For that matter, he has hardly kept up with musicology, and his broad assertions about Baroque performance style should be regarded with extreme skepticism—as, indeed, should many of his historical and textual claims. It is also difficult to imagine that a performer so involved with the music of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven should not have read (and been stimulated or irritated by) Charles Rosen's *The Classical Style*—but that most acclaimed of recent books on music is never mentioned in these pages.

Equally surprising is Leinsdorf's evident belief that young Americans of today, students of conducting, should be able to approach the German-Austrian musical literature with the same background and resources he brings. It is somehow their fault they were not born in Vienna a year after the premiere of *Der Rosenkavalier* and schooled in a rigidly classical educational system. What our young conductors do have is proximity to quite a different cultural tradition, one that is rich and varied but for which Erich Leinsdorf appears to have little use. That their natural qualifications, even propensities, might lie in the advocacy of living composers apparently has not occurred to him. □

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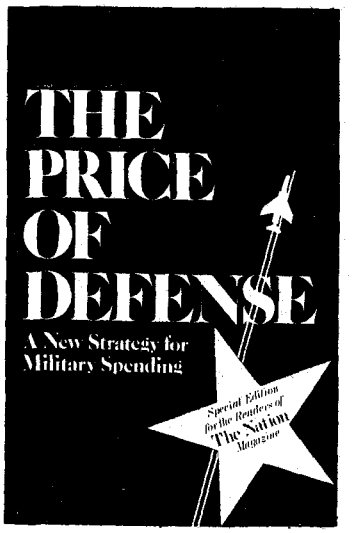

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L	O	O	K	I	N	G	■	C	R	I	T	I	C	S
S	■	R	■	C	■	E	■	E	■	S	■	T	■	S
■	E	D	I	T	O	R	I	N	C	H	I	E	F	■

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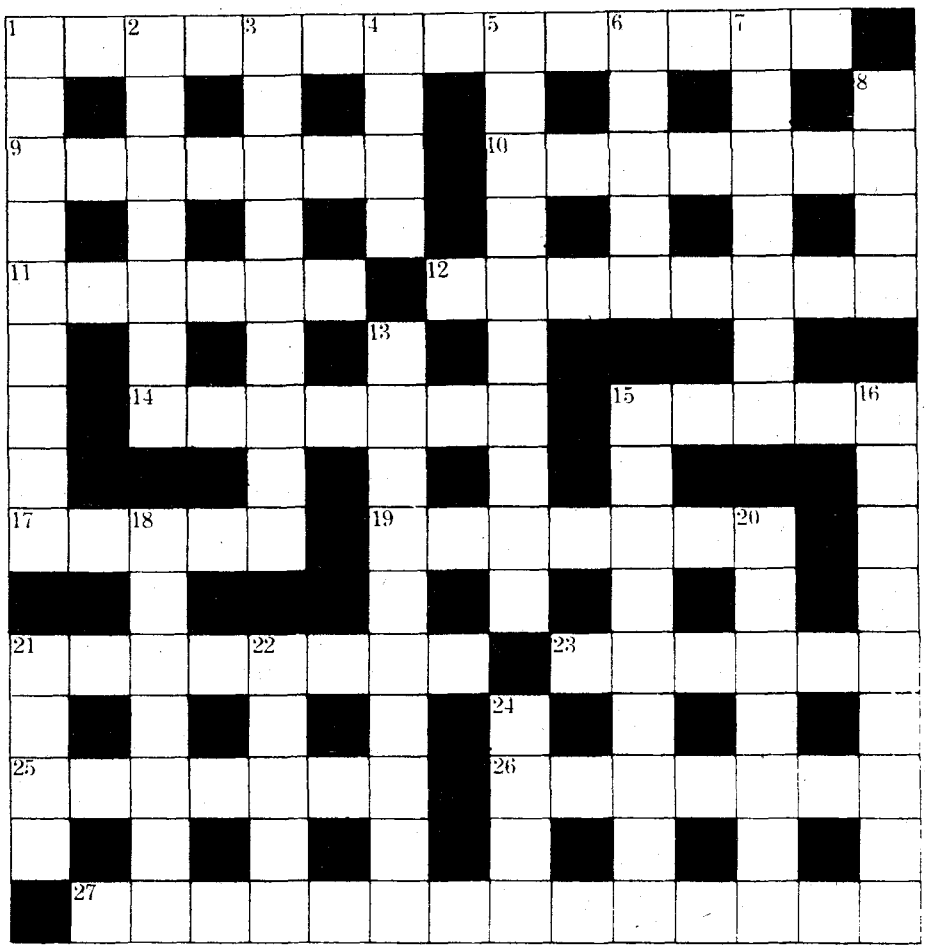
Crossword Puzzle No. 1873

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 See 22 down
9 Such a party used to indicate an inordinate amount of suspense in the west, being not of the old school. (7)
10 The way a beamish boy might go back. (Such a common girl may well have an expression of disbelief!) (7)
11 Men on board, perhaps. (They're evidently all broken up!) (6)
12 Get somewhat fat around, and appear obvious! (5,3)
14 What it takes to make a man sit through some disorder. (7)
15 Discover, by the sound of it, what the guilty man may be. (5)
17 and 19 Free to make someone angry—possibly getting burned on some occasion! (12)
21 It might be declared in court one is in a disconcerting amount of wind. (8)
23 My clue here is unusual, which might provide some discussion. (6)
25 Al, being a man from the country? (7)
26 His friend said he knew the fool well, being a traitor in a bad state. (7)
27 What the British might consider as important as the stiff upper lip, etc., though we once considered doing it at parties. (7,3,4)

DOWN

1 Roll up the piano top with a coat or jacket, perhaps. (9)
2 Keys, or what they might open. (7)
3 Not being told where a shot may be chance? (2,3,4)
4 Flourished like an American statesman. (4)
5 Did this old security band mark time during the day, too? (5,5)
6 No one is excluded for being tired! (3,2)
7 Light circle on a college magazine, perhaps. (7)
8 Close thus, perhaps. (4)
13 Augury where you might get to do it in vain. (10)
15 Not plain 17, but good ballet. (5,4)
16 One hopes the garbage will, when the dope comes out of it. (9)
18 Learns a way to get a bang out of the things kept here. (7)
20 It might be considered tragic to choose a one-time god. (7)
21 They had their rackets, as you will see from observation. (4)
22 and 1 across On deck, as they say, passing something on, like certain seamen. (5,7,3,4)
24 Questioning the character of the thaw, perhaps? (4)

SEE LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION AT LEFT

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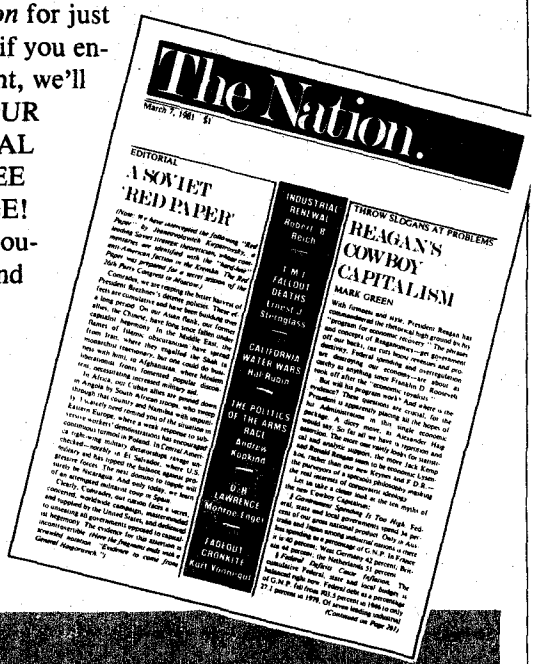

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